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NOW I KNOW

A Primer of Faith

"Now I know in part; but then shall I
know even as also I have been known."

—I Corinthians 13:12

BY

JOHN ARCHIBALD MACCALLUM

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THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED TO
MY WIFE
IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF
HER CRITICISM, SYMPATHY,
ENCOURAGEMENT AND
COMRADESHIP

PREFACE

This book is a simple transcript from experience. It makes no attempt to systematize the doctrines of the Christian religion. While it deals with some of the great theological ideas, this is only because I believe I have worked them out in my own thought and made them a part of myself. Doubtless many truths essential to an adequate explanation of the Christian faith are omitted, but that is more the author's misfortune than his fault. I have spoken only of what I know, and not of what the great of old or of the present have told me. True I have quoted, though sparingly, from the Bible and other sources, but my motive has been to express my thought more forcibly and bring out its reasonableness more clearly rather than to confirm my position by an appeal to authority.

Whether we like it or not, the day of external authority is gone in the religion of the educated man. Never again will a reference to Genesis be accepted as proof that the earth is flat. When the leaders of the church fall back upon authority and attempt to tell men today what they must believe, they are making a fatal mistake. If the men of tomorrow are to be saved to Christianity, Christianity must be made acceptable to them in the open market of ideas. I believe that this can be done, but only if Christianity is presented as a vitalizing experience rather than as a series of propositions which must be accepted without question.

Doubtless I shall be charged with rationalism in trying to establish a concordat between my inherited faith on the one side, and my acceptance of the findings of science on

the other. If I were to have choice forced upon me, however, I would prefer to be called a rationalist rather than an apostle of irrationalism. The church that contradicts facts which are taught in every secondary school in the civilized world, and by implication in primary schools as well, will soon become a spent force and take a faded place in the catalogue of exhausted influences. But the real leaders in the church are aware that their Christianity forces no such sorry course upon them.

These are turbulent days in the field of religious thought. Many young people are turning from the church because they believe that to be a Christian, it is necessary to acknowledge the authority of traditions which their reason has finally ejected from their consciousness. If I can help any of them to disengage the essential truth from the dogmatic forms in which it has been imprisoned and reveal its possibilities as a vital force in their lives, I shall be happy. Having come to the House of Faith myself by the Road of Doubt, is it too much to hope that I may be able to pilot some of my youthful fellow travelers safely through the arid wastes of controversy, recrimination and denial to the mountain of the House of the Lord?

J. A. MACC.

Philadelphia, April, 1924.

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NOW I KNOW

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT GOD

I

God!

How vast is the thought that lies behind the word! In its fullness the idea of God is beyond the reach of the mind of man. Yet we cannot do without either the thought or the word, which is but a flickering symbol of the thought. True, some deny that there is a God, but their very denial is an inverted belief in his existence. Apart from God we can neither explain ourselves nor the world. And so, with perfect assurance, I affirm that *God is*.

This is the first thing I know about him. Even though my knowledge should stop here, I should have a solid foundation for the exercise of my faith. For while there would still be many other things I should wish to know, my heart would not be left in blank despair so long as I am sure that I owe my existence to a Being some of whose qualities must find a faint reflection in my poor self.

For if I know that God exists, my knowledge cannot stop there. It is pushed forward logically another step. Whence did I come in making my "willy-nilly" appearance in the world? When I say "I," I affirm my existence. How is this existence to be explained? I feel, I think, I look up at the skies with their myriads of stars, and wonder how they came to be. It is a mystery, men tell me, beyond our finding out. Half baffled, I look into myself and find that I can follow in thought the movements of the stars and appreciate the beauty of river and mountain and shifting clouds. I can mark out the courses of the seasons, winter, spring, summer, and autumn.

Again I am driven to one conclusion. God must have made the universe with its suns and stars. It is an expression of himself, or in the phrase of Goethe, his living garment. To him who can read its deeper meaning it tells of the power, wisdom, beauty and love of its Maker.

II

To the mind as it strives to increase its reach we can set no boundaries. We are never sure in regard to any place at which it stops that it will stop there long. Knowing as I do that God is, and that he is the creator of the world and of myself, I am impelled to move on and ask what is his character? What are the qualities of his nature? Is he good? This is no easy question. How do we know that God is not indifferent, capricious, cruel or malevolent? In fact there are moods in which we all think thus of God, for the soul has its weathers, and in hours of storm and darkness when hope fades and faith is depressed, it seems as though God takes a grim delight in driving his creatures out into the storm and dispossessing them of their joys. The Psalmist felt thus when he cried—"I am come in deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried; mine eyes fail me while I wait for my God." There is no denying that a strong brief can be prepared against the goodness of God. Why do the virtuous die and the wicked live on in their wickedness? Why does the lightning strike the church and leave the house of evil mirth unscathed? Why does injustice so often triumph over justice?

In any attempt to answer these questions we must bear in mind that we see only in part. The entire field of the divine activity and purpose would have to be taken into account before a demonstrable conclusion could be reached, and that field is beyond our ken. Vast though the evil in the part we do see, however, it is more than balanced by the good. Why is my soul cast down and disquieted

within me? Its state of upheaval is due to the good that is struggling for expression in and through me. I am discontented not because I am vexed, but because of my longing for better things. What is the source of this longing? It is a part of my nature, and as we have seen, that is rooted in God. By whatever methods or processes our moral standards have arisen, they always and everywhere trace back to God. Thus it follows that the good overbalances the evil even at this immature stage in the world's development.

Our fathers made the mistake of dividing people into two classes—saints and sinners. To them a man was either saved or unsaved, one or the other. But if I am saved in this sense, I am through growing and little or no incentive is left for strenuous action. The truth is, I am saved in part and unsaved in part. In varying degrees all men share this experience with me. Here is a sailor, for instance, rough in manner, coarse in grain, bestial in appetite. A crisis arises. He jumps overboard to save a child, risking his life or giving it perhaps for another, who had no claim upon him except that of a common humanity. "An impulse," you say. Yes, but whence came an impulse which could transform that lewd drunkard of a few days ago into a hero? The secret of his heroism is the divine fire within him that even his worst debauchery could never fully quench. Because man partakes of the divine nature, he is never satisfied for long with what he is or what he has done and therein lies the assurance that in the end the good will come to its own and is in fact gaining ground all the time. Movements for the better treatment of children, the emancipation of women, fresh advances in social and industrial justice, and an enlarged sense of neighborliness make it evident that the path of the human family is upward. The springs of these movements are in God. I know that he is good, because I know that man is potentially good.

III

Again by force of logic I am driven to another affirmation about God. If he is, and is the creator, and is good, he must be a person. It is common for men to love beauty far beyond their power to create. But no man ever created a beauty which he did not love. God could not be the source of the beauty of the world and not be in love with it. The fact that he is the inspirer of my purer aims indicates that his nature shares these aims with ours. If this is true, then he must be in his infinite sphere of action what I am in my finite sphere, a person and not a mere force, or "power that makes for righteousness," for no vague impersonal tendency could have blundered into the creation of the world and myself.

Among many other qualities two essentials of personality stand out. The first is awareness, the distinguishing of one's self from other selves and other things. The second essential of personality is conscious will or purpose. Since the creature cannot surpass the creator, I am sure that God distinguishes himself from all other selves and that he has a purpose toward which he is steadfastly moving. His distinguishing of himself from me establishes a definite relationship between us. Its nature has already been implied. I am his child. He is my Father.

The Psalmist understood. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Thus out of my experience the teaching of Jesus that God is the Father of all men is confirmed. Fatherhood involves interest and love. His watchful eye is ever upon me to reprove my selfish waywardness; to undergird my weakness, to quicken my finer sensibilities, to call to fruitful activity the noblest possibilities of my being. The recognition of this sublime relationship prompted the Psalmist to cry out in an exalted mood, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

The fatherhood of God imposes definite obligations upon me toward other men and makes them all my neigh-

bors whether they live near or far and no matter what their race, color or faith. Meantime, whatever my circumstances, I am assured by it of a hearing at the Supreme Court of the universe. Even though I am guilty of willful disregard of the divine law, because he is my Father, he will hear the cry of my penitent heart and in his mercy will comfort and forgive.

IV

In the midst of such reflections, however, the skeptic within me may rise and try to shake my faith. Like his prototype of old, suppose he asks maliciously, "Where is thy God?" In answer I can only say that he is everywhere. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." "But that is too vague," says the skeptic, or obverse side of my believing mind, which is trying to control my thought. "It means so much that it means nothing. Where is the heavenly throne in this infinite universe of which you have been speaking in such grandiose terms? How can God hear so many prayers at the same time, coming as they do from so many places?"

I confess that I cannot fully resolve the mystery. I see only dimly as through a darkened glass. But that God is everywhere is not more mysterious than that I am in so many places at the same time. It is an axiom of science that a thing is where it works. I go into a wireless telephone station and speak. What happens? Wherever there is a receiving mechanism within the thousands of square miles covered by the radius of that station, my voice may be heard. Where am I? Wherever my voice reaches and it may possibly be wherever my thought is, in London, Venice, the hills of Mars or the valleys of

Neptune. If it is true that my mind's active reach covers such wide ground, surely it imposes no impossible strain upon my faith to believe that God is everywhere and that if my heart is attuned to his infinite heart of love, I shall hear his voice and understand his will in so far as it relates to my own duty and welfare. That is all I need to know.

I can not speak for those who have arrived at the conviction that God is not needed to explain their own existence and that of the universe. For me it is simpler, easier and immeasurably more satisfying to accept God as the final and only worthy explanation of the world. I would be just, and that makes me positive he is just, and his justice will not mock me or deceive me, but will lead me on through the encircling gloom of my ignorance and disappointment to the city with foundations which he is building of human souls that share his purposes and in their own dim way think his thoughts after him, striving to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. I know that God is, that he is the creator of the world and me, and that he is good, that he is my Father, and that he is always with me, "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet."

V

Thus far our discussion has dealt with what may be called the intellectual approach to God, based upon grounds suggested by reason. I cannot turn from this subject, however, without the admission that ultimately the sense of God is a matter of faith. For however convincing the preponderance of the arguments in support of the belief that God exists, absolute proof is beyond the power of our human reason. There is always some ground for the opposite conclusion, for God cannot be seen as a man is seen or heard as the wind is heard. We may say that God is speaking in the wind but that is not

evidence to the doubter, for to him this sound is only a record of the play of physical forces. It is a matter of the kind of interpretation employed whether or not it points to God. The results in the way of interpretation depend upon the qualities of the interpreting mind.

For this reason a healthy conviction of the reality of God requires the support of faith, rising with urgent pressure out of the hidden depths of the soul. Faith is a part of the deposit of the race experience in process of accumulation through countless generations. And try as our conscious minds may to expel it as a shadow or a superstition, it refuses to be dislodged or to abdicate its directive power over our lives during the long stretches of time that our thought is otherwise engaged. "The heart has reasons that reason cannot understand." From immemorial ages our forbears believed in gods. In process of time this belief moved on and out into the persuasion that there is but one God, who rules the world and is over all and through all and in all. This conviction is stored up in the reservoirs of race experience of which every man's nature is a conduit. No man can escape from its pressure. It is always pushing our thought back to God.

Now and then some rebel tries to startle us by the assertion that the modern mind cannot believe in God. Timid souls are frightened by such statements when they come from men of education who seem to speak with authority. But we need not fear. The racial instincts which prompt us to look upward will not give us rest until we find rest in the end to which faith always directs our souls. The ground swell of the ages moves against the skeptic. The deep within the heart of man ever responds in the end to the deep of the Eternal. Even those of us who remain dumb in the face of the barrage of doubts poured forth by the skeptic, no match at all for his superior intellectual agility, can still feel undismayed, for we know that he is

wrong. The hopes and fears of our souls reach out unsatisfied until they reach God. Faith is the wellspring which nourishes a healthy mind and makes it fruitful. It is the dynamo where the power is generated by which we rise to holiness and become one with God.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT CHRIST

I

Christ!

How familiar is the word throughout the modern world, both in itself and in the various settings of phrase in which it is placed: Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ, and more recent forms such as the Eternal Christ, and the Christ that is to be. Originally an adjective it has come to be a noun and a synonym for Jesus. True, Jesus and Christ are indissolubly associated in the mind, for historically Jesus is the Christ, that is, the anointed one. But for practical purposes it is better to use the name Jesus for the man of Galilee who lived his life on earth, amid conditions and under limitations akin to those all men share. This enables us to reserve the name Christ for the divinely majestic and timeless personality which the historic Jesus has grown to be. He has set such forces in motion that he is almost universally recognized as supreme among the children of God, the Father's Eternal Son.

But what do I know of him? At least I can affirm that Jesus of Nazareth lived on earth about 1900 years ago. This may seem a meagre foundation upon which to build, but it gives me a point of departure. Few indeed of those who lived at a much more recent date have left any record of their experience or influence upon their generation that would enable us to tell that they had ever lived at all. That Jesus, who was later called Christ, was born and grew up, worked and taught, healed and preached, loved, suffered, and died, is as well attested a fact as any in history. Various writings have been preserved in

which the story of his life is set forth in sufficient detail. While he himself wrote no books, he made such an impression on others that they were impelled to write down both the message he proclaimed and also an account of the influences it set in motion in a multitude of minds. These records also tell of his courage, sympathy, wisdom, foresight and love. Altogether they present such a picture of gracious and winsome manhood, actuated by the master passion of love for others, that reverent affection is kindled in my heart as I read the story.

II

When I examine the details of his earthly experience it gives me satisfaction to know that he passed through all the stages that every man must traverse, from a babe in his mother's arms to the full power of his manhood. He increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man, grew physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. He learned of God at his mother's knee, and later in the village school connected with the synagogue in Nazareth, his knowledge expanded as he read the ancient scriptures and came to understand the work and motives of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and other great men of his race.

Then in the course of the years the obligations of life fell upon him and he went to work in the carpenter shop where doubtless he had spent many an hour as a child watching Joseph as with sure stroke he shaped yokes for the oxen of the neighboring husbandmen, or tables for the housewives of the village. He took his place at the bench and learned in the school of toil the practical lessons which work always teaches. But beyond his day's task he saw the workers of the world. He learned to share their hopes and sympathize with them in their disappointments. "The still sad music of humanity" was always with him, and as he pondered on the sins and sorrows and injustices of life, he grew in insight and in mental and

spiritual power. The day came when the light of discovery broke and his creative spirit overflowed the shop and the village. Then he went out as a teacher and prophet to tell others the way of life that had opened out before him.

III

One Sabbath day in the village synagogue, under the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus declared himself as the chosen of God whose duty it was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to announce deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the bruised and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Behind this declaration lay years of training and meditation, in school and shop, and the stern discipline of the wilderness, where he had thought through the problems of destiny. As always, his reward was the reward of the prophet. His townsmen drove him forth: his family doubted his sanity.

But undismayed he continued to teach with the authority born of experience. He did not quote the scribes to verify his affirmations, but set forth the new-born truth as it came naked from his soul. Men listened to his words for the life that was in them. They felt his power. Here was a teacher different from any they had ever known. His language was the language of the people and not of the schools. His illustrations were taken from the homely facts of every day, the wind, the setting sun, the flowers, the sower sowing his seed, the plowman in the field, the women grinding at the mill, the shepherd tending his sheep and finding that one was lost. The people hung upon his words because they understood him and felt that he understood them. And what was his theme? God! He had no other subject. He told them God was their Father, and that he cared for them and would forgive them if they would only ask him. He told them of the purpose of God to give them life in this world and the

world to come. The effect was wonderful. They grew in wisdom and understanding as they listened to him.

I know Jesus as the supreme teacher of the ages.

IV

As he went about giving instruction and inspiration he often came upon the bruised and broken, the lame, the halt and blind. He met men and women suffering some distemper of the mind, and he suffered with them because of his infinite tenderness of heart. And though his chief motive was to teach and make men better acquainted with God, where opportunity offered, he often felt constrained to exercise his gift of healing by curing their bodily ills. Many indeed were the occasions when at his recreative touch of hand or heart smouldering faith burst into the blaze that brought health to those who had suffered so long that they had given up hope of recovery. Only incidentally was he the great physician. The marvelous cures he wrought must not be allowed to obscure our vision of his fundamental purpose. Bodily health is good, but it is not the chief end of man. To know God is my destiny and some know him better through a shattered body than others through a well one. I know Jesus as the supreme physician of the ages for body, mind and soul.

V

In the New Testament record, Jesus is also spoken of as a prophet, and without doubt in him prophecy reached its zenith. There had been great prophets before him, Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and Jeremiah, and no one did them greater honor than he. There have also been great prophets since, but he is easily first. Much damage has been done to our religion by a mistaken idea of the prophet's work. His chief business is to interpret the time in which he lives and show his own generation the way out of its difficulties. The prophet is always a man

of rugged principle, who can tell as a matter of principle and not of calculation or second sight, the ultimate drift of the tendencies of his time. If true religion is on the wane and materialism on the increase, he is not deceived but warns his fellows to open their blind eyes to the doom they will bring upon their nation unless they cease from their worship of false gods and every man deal fairly with his brother. In so far as he is a prophet he detaches himself from the local and the temporary interests and conflicts and in speaking single mindedly in terms of principle, he speaks to every age. Here Jesus stands pre-eminent.

Scarcely a sentence of which we have record fell from his lips that is not as true to-day as when it was spoken. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Such utterances are beacons today as much as they were then and will be in the indefinite future. I know Jesus as supreme among the prophets of all the ages.

VI

These and other qualities of mind and heart which he possessed in a unique degree account for the impression that Jesus made upon his generation. Many became his disciples and others paid him almost equal tribute by becoming his bitter enemies. They saw that his teaching would undermine their privileges, so they rejected him who was their greatest friend. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." To win their affection and support he would have had to compromise with truth, but his first and only loyalty was to God. His Father's business was always on his heart. Some understood him in part at least. They sat at his feet to learn of God and

his kingdom. They left all and followed him. When he died for truth and right, with clearer insight they laid new hold upon his motive. They saw through his mission as they had never seen when he was present with them, and their souls became flaming torches spreading his gospel everywhere, so that in death he was immeasurably stronger than in life. Whatever we may think of him, or however we may explain him, the fact remains that in righteous influence and personal power for good no one has ever lived who can be compared with him.

Thus far I have been speaking of those human qualities which all normal men possess in some degree, but which were manifested in Jesus in such fullness that during his brief ministry as a teacher and prophet, the day soon came when he was recognized as the Eternal Son of God. Peter's answer to his question, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," sprang from a recognition of his divine character. Intuitively Peter realized that in him the long hope of Israel for a Saviour had been fulfilled, and though afterward he may have wavered in his conviction at certain times and in certain moods, that conviction sustained him and the other disciples after the death of their Master and enabled them to lay the everlasting foundations of the church which was to bear his name.

The explanation of this power to transform such frail men as Matthew, Peter, James and John from obscure, simple toilers to world figures is to be found in one fact alone, the complete identity of will and purpose between Jesus and the Father. "I and the Father are one." "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father." The God I know and worship is the God whom I see in Christ. In the glory of his purity, his consecration to duty, his sympathy, his sense of justice, his absolute righteousness, he is the revelation of God. In him the qualities of the divine take on concrete form. I know Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

I

As we pass from God and Christ to a consideration of the Holy Spirit, we find ourselves on much more difficult ground when it comes to furnishing outward evidence that will prove convincing to the doubting mind. While it is true that no man has seen God at any time, it is equally true that every man has seen a world which makes it not unreasonable to believe that God is its author. And while interpretations of Christ may vary from the friendly view that he is the Eternal Son of God to the snap judgment that he was an impractical dreamer, who set in motion forces he could not control, the fact of Christ is unquestioned by every normal mind.

There is no evidence of the existence of the Holy Spirit so obvious to the observer, and indeed there is probably no element of the religious life which is more hazy or less clearly defined even among educated and devoted Christians. To most people "Holy Spirit" is a phrase, vague in content, which can neither be explained or understood. While I feel no less confident of the existence of the Holy Spirit than of the existence of God, I confess that it will be difficult for me to set forth my knowledge to others with equal force, particularly to those whose temperament and training are widely different from mine.

II

Yet I know unmistakably for myself that the Holy Spirit exists. The Holy Spirit is the medium in which I live. The cynic or the skeptic may point out that my life offers little outward evidence of vitalizing contact with this inexhaustible source of truth, beauty, goodness and wis-

dom. The fact remains that were it not for this continuous ministry of inspiration, my life would be bereft. Nor is the Holy Spirit responsible for my failures. The law of gravitation always works whether or not men work with it. The Holy Spirit is likewise always at work in and round about me, and the fault is mine if I fail to respond.

Some men speak as though they were the sole beneficiaries of the Spirit, but the truth is that all men stand on the same ground so far as the ministry of the Spirit is concerned. The difference in the religious experiences of men is accounted for by their attitude, intimate or distant, toward the Spirit. Lack of interest in the values of the soul is the outward sign of an inward insensitiveness to the Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is as constant as that of the sunlight. No man has any prior claims upon that ministry or any special privileges arising from it. The Holy Spirit is everywhere, free as the wind and wave, and ready for entrance at the signal of welcome into every heart, to inspire, to heal and to recreate.

III

The Holy Spirit may be defined as God in action, the creative urge issuing from the Father, in the form of an invitation to communion, and imparting the energy of the more abundant life to every one who will receive. The Spirit guides me into new experiences of truth, and becomes the adventurous urge within my heart also which pushes me on into the future with confidence and hope.

Thus far I have been speaking out of my personal experience. Here alone is the fountain-head of that complete and final authority which gives rise in the mind to perfect peace, that direct contact with the sources of truth which enables me to say with ringing confidence, "I know." By contrast, there is always room for doubt when we depend upon the testimony of others, no matter how competent they are. Our experience of their ex-

perience is second-hand and therefore not as vital as our own.

This does not mean, however, that their experience is of no value to us. On the contrary, its corroborative value is priceless, for it gives an objective background to our own experiences. In addition it serves to enlarge our horizons and provide us immeasurably more data for the carrying on of our individual life experiment than if we had been left to our own resources. How poor I would be in thought and achievement were it not that back of me lies the collective experience of the race which we call history! Indirectly I can make this experience my own, by passing it through the crucible of my mind. How wonderfully it has served me in warning me against pitfalls into which others have fallen and showing me the bridge of truth that has been built across many a morass of error by the sacrifice and the effort of multitudes who have traversed the long and difficult road between me and that far off day when man left his cave and moved toward the dawn. Little did primitive man dream of the heights his posterity were to scale. No wandering tribesman in his wildest imaginings had even a remote picture of a Galileo, a Shakespeare, a Lincoln, a Pasteur or an Edison. Yet potentially all these princes of achievement were in the mental womb of those first voyagers who struck their tents and moved out, not knowing whither they went. A wonderful faith sustained them and enabled them to continue in the face of crushing difficulties and perpetual disappointments.

They were my fathers, and I can account for what has come of their adventure only by recourse to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the principle of explanation. They were strengthened and upheld by an inward dynamic of which they were probably unconscious, but it never failed them. That dynamic was the Spirit of God. He alone is the explanation and the cause of the upward and onward march of events. Sometimes they

seem to take the backward trail, but this retrogression is more than made up in the next advance. The wind never controls the tide. Because I can see progress running like a golden stream through all the darkness of the ages behind, I have confidence that my sense of a comforting and sustaining Presence, the spirit of wisdom, truth and love within me, is an index of the supreme reality that will carry mankind safely through the undiscovered future ahead.

It is a quality of our nature to aspire and hope. The instincts of the animal world imprison themselves in a stable round of monotony, but man is always ready to strike his tents and start again upon the march. With him the hope of a better country, "a continuing city," is a never failing spur to action. Philosophers may debate the question whether the race has advanced or stood still, but I rest content in the belief that with all its areas of barrenness and failure openly acknowledged, life in our modern Christian civilization is immeasurably better than life in ancient Rome or Babylon. The Holy Spirit is God in history, the key to its tangled course.

IV

Are there evidences of the working of the Holy Spirit in the social life of our time? Yes! The Holy Spirit is the binder which holds mankind together. Even though the separating influences of class and racial hatreds make sad havoc in our social life, the Spirit is always at work like the stars in their courses, supplying the antidote. Suspicion is eaten away, and hate though it clings desperately to its seat is undermined by the slow but sure processes of the Spirit permeating the corporate life of men and now again transforming their animosities and alienations into better understandings and friendlier relations.

The Holy Spirit is the vital principle in society. It does its work silently like the sun and is always trying its best to bear fruit. Sometimes periods of infertility in-

tervene but in the end conditions yield to this silent power. The Spirit of God that dwells in man never consents to an armistice in its war with his evil passions.

In the autumn the leaves take on rich colorings which are the prelude to their end. Soon they begin to fall. Frost, winds and rains hurry the process, and in a few weeks after the first touch of the autumnal artist, stripped branches only are left to face the driving hails and snows of winter. But the leaves of one tree defy the storms to do their worst. This is the scrub oak. After the rest of the forest has been laid bare, poplars, maples, elms and beeches, the scrub oak remains clothed as in the summer except that the green has turned to brown. Nature plans a new offensive and makes a fierce and sustained attack. The north winds bear down upon it freighted with snow and hail, but the brown leaves cling stubbornly to their stems.

Then comes the spring. The snows melt and the grass begins to grow in the sunshine. The sap creeps upward through the boles of the trees, and moves steadily out along the branches. When it reaches the tips of the scrub oak to which the old leaves cling, they offer no further resistance but drop silently to their graves. What driving rain, snow and hail could not do is done by the gentle silent resurgence of life.

So it is with the Holy Spirit. Our motives may be selfish, materialistic, barren, but the Spirit is always working within to break down our stubborn denials of truth and love, and lay the foundation for that fuller life which is to be "in a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The Holy Spirit is the supreme unifying influence in all our human relations, the breath of God in man.

V

But the critic enters his caveat in the form of a question—what are the inter-relations between God and

Christ and the Holy Spirit? Is each separate from the others? Are there three persons each with his own initiative and self-determination? If so, how can it be they always arrange to work in harmony, or which is the final arbiter of their actions? There is nothing to be gained by denying the relevancy of such questions and a host of others of like import that might be asked. We live in a world of mystery and at best the conclusions of the human mind are provisional. Nevertheless, on reflection the relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not so baffling as they seem when first presented. We should remember that the word "person" used with the relations of the three members of the Godhead as a context has a different history and meaning from its meaning in popular speech. If this were better known many an argument and many a doubt raised by the Trinity, itself a word which does not occur in the Bible, would never take place or be entertained.

The Latin word *persona* is from the drama and means character, in the sense of the rôle that one is taking. Accordingly, God in three persons meant originally God in three aspects, manifestations or characters. God appears in three characters: in himself in his absolute majesty, hidden, almighty, infinite, the source of all our life, the fountain-head of all our being. He appears in Christ, the Son, the revelation of himself, the incarnation of truth, mercy, justice, love, courage, faith and hope, in terms which all may understand. He speaks also in the Creative Spirit, working in and through the universe, finding highest form in human life, and giving his fairest and most alluring promise in that ideal state which man has now more reason to believe he will one day reach than his rude ancestors had reason to believe such a civilization as ours would one day be attained. In the Holy Spirit he is working in and manifesting himself through the life of men on earth. Their struggles for justice, brotherhood and peace when reduced to the simplest terms

are the outworking of his indwelling spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.”

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST; AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE: WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT MAN.

I

Man: what is he? What am I? the Psalmist asked in classic words as he contrasted the immensity of the heavens with his own frail self. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

It is evident that we cannot think of man apart from God or God apart from man. Each is an aspect of the other. What can I say of myself? This seems a foolish question at first—there is so much that I seem to know of my own powers and plans and place in the scheme of things. But not far along in my explorations as I begin to dig in, this knowledge begins to become more and more shadowy. Long before the analysis is complete, I realize how little there is of which I can be absolutely sure, and the fading of the certitudes formerly taken for granted threatens to undermine the foundations completely upon which I have rested with such confidence.

At my mother's knee I was taught to look out upon a real world made according to a definite plan by a divine artificer. God gave me ears to hear, eyes to see and a tongue to speak. I was told that I was his child and that if I would be wise, good and obedient to his laws, I should have a place in his favor both in this world and in the next. "For ever and ever!" How the phrase haunts me still. It was so freighted with tragic and awesome meaning. I hoped almost against hope, and prayed that I might escape the burning lake in the nether world into which all bad people are pushed after the manner de-

picted in Angelo's Last Judgment. On the other hand my idea of God was not so alluring as to hold out the promise of much joy should I be so fortunate as to spend eternity in his presence.

Then came increasing knowledge that made me begin to realize that life is not so simple as I had been led to believe. First the historian pushed the curtains of the past back far beyond the time at which I had been told that "heaven and earth rose out of chaos." The geologist informed me that this planet was ages in the making. The astronomer told of stars and distances that reveal the earth as a mere fleck of dust swinging on a leash in the void. The biologist broke the news that all the lower animals are my poor relations and that in the upward climb of man from his lowly origins many of their qualities have been retained, thus accounting for the ape and tiger in me.

Another teacher, the psychologist, showed me how complex my personality is. The story runs like this: The mind is composed of a network of mental elements associated in various systems. Sometimes these work together in harmony, but at other times they engage in serious conflicts. St. Paul referred to this in his confession, "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." At times unruly members of the kingdom of the mind force unwise and disastrous decisions, because of the stubbornness and passion with which they assert their wishes. When the good within me loses control, yielding sovereignty for the moment to some base impulse, I act in a way that brings me shame. This gives the pessimist ground for his assertions that man is vain, self-centered, unrestrained, driven by destructive passions. He stands ready, the pessimist continues, to expose himself to vile contagion for a momentary pleasure. Immediate desire wins with him over future good, and he is too wayward and foolish to be capable of avoiding self-destruction in war.

Thus the psychologist broke down my inherited idea that it is always simple and easy to choose the straight and narrow path. In my subconscious mind, far below the surface of my ordinary interests, he told me, a Mr. Hyde is lurking in the darkness, waiting always for a chance to overthrow the good man I would be. John Newton, the Puritan divine, knew the difficulties involved in righteous action. Seeing a drunkard reeling past he said, "There goes John Newton but for the grace of God."

Still another teacher was the sociologist, who also handed me a primer and made me spell out the lessons he assigned. He showed me that the environment in which we live is the soil in which the soul is planted. When the soil is bad, the crop is likely to be bad. Thus multitudes never have a chance. They are warped and deformed in body and soul by the flood of evil influences that roll over them in their formative years. Growing up in the street, vulgarity, vice and even crime form the air they breathe. They are hardly more to blame for their failure than a sickly plant struggling against weeds in an impoverished garden is to blame for its condition.

Thus the simple world of childhood became bafflingly complex, and for a time in this vortex of opposing currents it seemed that all certainties were forever gone.

II

In this confusion as I tried to inventory what was left, I found myself able to say, "I know that I exist. I think; I am a person because I am aware of myself as an integer and not a fraction of other men or of the world." Whatever the truth may be about the distances in space and time connected with the making of the universe and the origin of man, one thing at least was certain, I was alive, a conscious being, set in a world of wonderful interest with multitudes of men much like myself, whose minds seemed

to work in the same manner as mine, at least in dealing with material things. Though we might differ about abstract ideas such as the nature of justice or beauty, we agreed that $2+2=4$, or that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, which confirmed my assurance of the reality of my existence in an ordered and not a topsy-turvy world.

III

Nature is a word often used. It has many meanings or aspects, but in brief it stands for the sum total of the forces that shape the universe. Winds and tides, sunlight and showers, grass, trees, flowers, the lion in the jungle, and the cattle on the hills are all works of nature. So is man. I was born and I shall die, along with the flower of the field or the bird of the air. I must keep in vital connection with the reservoir of energy in mother nature no less than the tree or the elephant. My kinship with the living world about me is attested in a thousand ways.

Though I am rooted in nature with these other works, nature rises higher in me than in them. There is a power within me which lifts me above them and gives me control over them at many points. Irresistible though they are when blindly combated, they can be wooed to change their course and do my bidding. I can harness tides and winds, though I can neither stop nor start them with my puny strength. I can turn a stream from its native course. I can analyze the materials of which my own body as a child of nature is built, and also describe those which enter into the making of the most distant of the stars. Daily I am compelling her to yield me new secrets. I have directed her creative energy into the formation of new plants and flowers and bred improved grain and cattle which supply my needs better than her own creations. There is none other of her creatures save man who thus can turn her power into channels of his own choosing.

Man is not flattering himself when he affirms that he is the "roof and crown of things."

IV

That is not all. The best of the story has not yet been told. Whatever my relation to nature, I know that I am a child of God, and nature itself is but a manifestation of his power and purpose. I derive the strength to control my natural appetites and passions from him. In my relations to my fellows I strive to be just and merciful and pure. Though I often fail grievously, I have a right to have my capacity judged by what I aim to be, especially when the achievements of chosen men show that my ideal is not impossible. Besides, the shame I feel when I do wrong proves the nobility of my origin. Whence this sense of justice, this love of truth, this desire for a merciful heart, except it came from God? There are those who affirm that these and other virtues are mere functions of a material nervous system, but I know that they are wrong because the lower can never explain the higher. The body never explains the soul. Only God explains man. Whatever of goodness, justice, reason, faith and love is in me came from him. The fact that I have these qualities even in embryo is a proof of my divine origin.

V

Nor is my experience of myself yet exhausted. "I am a part of all that I have met." Into the fabric of my being all the achievements of which I have ever heard are woven, and all the impressions made upon my mind by the wonders of the world. My spirit thrills to hear of wrongs righted, of valorous and chivalrous deeds in defense of the weak, of pioneers in thought and action who braved the terrors of unknown worlds because of their love of truth. Isaiah, Paul, Bruno, Huss, Knox, Cromwell, Lincoln, Emerson, Livingstone, daring souls like these form the hierarchy that holds my fealty and in sitting at their feet

I take on in some degree the color and texture of their souls. I hold communion with the great thinkers of the ages. Why should I be lonely when I can listen to Socrates discussing with the gifted youth of Athens the deeper problems of destiny, or follow Copernicus in his exploration of the heavens, or Cook and Magellan through hitherto undiscovered seas? If Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe are my friends, why should I be distressed if my neighbor seems to slight me? Daily I hold converse with them, and as I hear their messages I become in part a vehicle of their wisdom. In me they live again.

VI

Sometimes I chafe because of the limitations imposed upon me by my body; it moves so slowly and anchors me to such a narrow radius. But a little reflection shows that this restriction is more apparent than real.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.¹

My soul recognizes no barriers of time or space. I ride on the wings of the morning in my thought and play on the crest of the waves in tropic oceans or with Peary or Stefansson walk the shifting ice floes that carpet arctic seas. Neither cold nor heat affect my journeyings as I move through space, piercing and passing beyond the Milky Way on swifter chariot than ever Phoebus drove, or leaping from Betelgeuse to Lyra and back to the Pleiades. The universe is my home, the world my front yard. One moment I am on the loftiest summit of the Himalayas, and the next on the wide bosom of the Amazon, or riding on an eagle's back. My body alone is tied to a point in

¹ Richard Lovelace.

space. My mind moves at will anywhere within the orbit of the finite.

The body is not bounded by its skin;
 Its effluence, like a gentle cloud of scent,
 Is wide into the air diffused, and, blent
 With elements unseen, its way doth win
 To ether frontiers, where take origin
 Far subtler systems, nobler regions meant
 To be the area and the instrument
 Of operations ever to begin
 Anew and never end. Thus every man
 Wears as his robe the garment of the sky—
 So close his union with the cosmic plan,
 So perfectly he pierces low and high—
 Reaching as far in space as creature can,
 And co-extending with immensity.²

Again the explanation is my kinship with God. Because he lives in me I live in him, and follow him as a child as he does his work and tends his flowers in the mystic gardens of infinity. Therein lies the incomparable dignity of my manhood.

VII

“He knew what was in man.” So the sacred record tells us of him whose communion with God and identity of purpose with him were far more intimate than anyone else has ever known. So complete was this communion and identity that he could say, “I and the Father are one.” Not least of his claims to spiritual sovereignty was this recognition of the worth of man. The tendency to underrate his own dignity and worth has always been one of man’s gravest faults. Doubtless many of his sins are due to this tendency to self-disparagement, for where little is expected little is evoked. “Only a man” is a much used derogatory phrase, and one that we should always avoid, as it tends to deny our divine origin and makes light of our priceless inheritance. We become oblivious to the miracle of human life because we are only superficially

² John Charles Earle. (By permission of Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.)

familiar with ourselves and other men. That the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat are transmuted into the vision of Isaiah, the dynamic thought of St. Paul, the motive of Francis Xavier, the imagination of Shakespeare, the observation of Darwin, the melody of Beethoven, the invention of Edison is a miracle second only to the universe itself. I know that the personality of man is of infinite value because of these divine qualities with which God has so generously endowed him. He is the work of God's own hands, the climax of ages of divine endeavor, and most precious in his Maker's sight.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT SIN

I

The very word sin seemed to bite and burn, blister and inflame and leave a festering wound, in the impressionable years, when I was beginning to learn the meaning of life. All around me sin had left its scars upon the social fabric. The drunkard, the leper and the abandoned woman were its victims; the prison and the mad-house its monuments. I learned early not to make the mistake of looking for sin only outside of myself. I had been told that my own nature was sinful and prone to evil, and I was not old in years before the truth of this statement was confirmed in my own experience. I found that sometimes when I would do good, evil was present with me, and that the virtue of any moment might vanish suddenly and give place to sinful passions. Philosophers may try to explain sin away, but it still remains, and functions in the lust, selfishness, cruelty, the vice, misery and crime which blight the careers of multitudes in every generation, and poison the life stream of the race.

II

Yet we are told that men are not worrying any more about their sins. Then so much the worse for men! In its most restricted meaning, sin is a missing of the mark, a failure to realize my best. When the day arrives that I am content to be less than God intended me to be, my state will be bad indeed. Doubtless myriads of men are in that condition. They have no over-weening desire for other than material things. Their minds are carnal and their prayers rarely embrace anything above the

interests and values of this world. Although in respect to many things worry and discontent are bad, if an epidemic of spiritual anguish over their sins should sweep over the world, until men universally cried for salvation, it would accomplish a world of good. Surely we all have sins that we have every reason to worry over. We have not made such a success of living together in this world that we have much ground for satisfaction. We still settle our international disputes by the sword, and kill and maim our fellow men by the millions. We sacrifice children in multitudes to the god of cheap production, the modern Moloch, while in pharisaical self-righteousness we denounce the ancient heathen for the sacrifices they made to their deities with a purer motive than commercial profit.

We shut in prisons which are cesspools of vice and crime thousands of boys whom we have neglected in the streets. Schooled and hardened as criminals, we turn them out to prey upon society without making any attempt to cure them of their evil intentions. When we catch them in the crimes we expect them to commit, we sentence them again to prison for years.

We are ruled by the mob spirit. We are afraid to speak out lest we hurt our own interests. We rob the government. We honor men who have never rendered honest service to the community. We spend immeasurably more on our selfish pleasures than in furthering the religion in which we profess to believe. Compare the numbers employed in raising, manufacturing and selling tobacco with the number of missionaries we send to foreign fields. Our interest in advancing the Kingdom of God is mild in comparison with our interest in increasing our own worldly position. If this seems too strong language, test it by trying to focus public attention upon some glaring injustice suffered by the Negro or any other weak group in society. These are our social

sins. They are reflected in the weaknesses we all share, and even in the best of men are evident to him who has the insight to analyze character. Because I am a man I know that I am a sinner.

III

But what is sin? So far as definitions go it would be a hard task to improve upon the statement of the Shorter Catechism—"Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." The trouble is, however, that definitions often raise more ghosts than they lay. In this case our definition simply pushes us back into another zone of darkness, for we are forced to ask—"What is the law of God?" "That is easy," some one may answer. "The Ten Commandments constitute the law." But even though we agree that all duty is covered in principle in the Decalogue, we are still faced with the necessity of interpreting and applying the commandments to any and every set of circumstances in which we find ourselves. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." Profound differences of opinion have arisen between men equally loyal to this law. Some farmers allow their crops to be spoiled by rain rather than take them in on the Sabbath, while others have no such scruples.

In short, the remainder of the Old and all the New Testament may be regarded as explanations, expositions and restatements in positive terms of the whole duty of man which is implicit in the Commandments. But this does not make the law of God easy to determine. The path of duty is never simple except in the more elemental relations of life. In Protestant theology the Bible is the final seat of authority. But this clearly defined principle has not saved us from friction and endless divisions in its applications. Our spiritual forefathers did not see that the line of truth in the Bible is

not self-evident. Every sect is a monument to their error. Men get out of the Bible what they bring to it, especially when their primary motive is to search for support for their doctrines rather than to learn the truth. Hence the definition of sin I have cited is not specific enough. We need to know more about the law of God before we can get much profit out of the position that sin is a violation of that law.

IV

There are other difficulties also in this definition. Transgression of any law may be either unconscious or deliberate. It may arise from ignorance or from defiance. Before we can put a just assessment upon an offence against the laws of man or God we must know the motive. The Shorter Catechism does not take this fact into account. Most of the traditional thinking of the church upon the nature and consequences of sin does not take it into account. Men have found this out and one reason for a less acute sense of sin in our time is due to this failure of the church. Intuitively men recognize that no just judge will condemn them as severely for sins of ignorance as for open rebellion against the law. The assertion that they are equally deserving of punishment, tends to break down the sense of guilt they would otherwise feel. To brand all men as rebels in the heavenly commonwealth who are equally reprobate before God may be good technical theology, but it is not true in spirit. It is often said that ignorance of the law is no excuse, but in everyday practice and in ordinary common sense ignorance is regarded as a mitigating circumstance by any wise court. The driver of a motor car who disregards a traffic signal is subject to arrest, but if he can show the officer in charge that he misread the signal, mercy will usually be shown to him. If, however, he wantonly defies the law, he will be dealt with

more severely. Such factors are taken into account by every fair tribunal.

v

A vast body of new knowledge has thrown much light upon the complicated nature of sin in recent times, rendering our task of defining it more difficult than it seemed to our forbears. Most of our current theological definitions are not of our making but were framed by men who lived in a static world. They did not take the movement of life into account. "New occasions teach new duties." For ages, chattel slavery was not regarded as a sin, but there came a day when men saw that it was a grievous offence against God because it was a wanton violation of human personality. The same is true of child labor, and of the liquor traffic. Always under the discipline of response to such truth as he has, the conscience of man tends to become more sensitive.

While we talk of the good old days, every true reader of history knows that bad as our own times are, and great though our sins, things are better now than ever before. If anyone doubts this statement let him make a comparative study of public and private morality a hundred or two hundred years ago in England or America with that of our own day. It is safe to say that his verdict will be strongly in our favor. Our standards are undoubtedly higher. This shows conclusively that sin is a relative term. It differs in meaning from age to age. With each increment of growth in righteousness, acts become branded as sinful that were previously accepted as in harmony with the prevailing moral standards. A striking illustration of this principle is seen in the emancipation of woman. She is fast winning complete recognition as a person rather than property, which was her status almost up to this generation, although the older idea still survives in some degree in law, the church and popular opinion.

VI

Again, as the part played by environment in the shaping of character is becoming more and more clearly recognized, its bearing upon our problem is seen to be revolutionary. Here are two boys growing up in a modern city. The one has a good home and his parents take every care to guard him against ills of body and of mind, and to nurture his best powers. He has the advantage of the most skilled physicians and teachers. The other boy is the son of a widow in an alley. While his mother goes out to clean offices, he has to be left to the cruel nurture of the streets. From his tenderest years, the game of outwitting the policeman goes on before his eyes. Vice and crime form a definite part of the air he breathes in the neighborhood of his home. If the mother loses in the contest between the environment and herself for her boy, it is small wonder. The natural thing is for the one boy to become a respectable citizen and the other an enemy of society. When good seed is planted in poor soil, a poor crop is certain. This is always true of wheat and sometimes true of men.

Environment, therefore, must be given a large place in making a diagnosis of sin from now on and in view of the many hidden factors it introduces we shall, if we are wise, be slow in passing judgment upon our fellows. These considerations may have been in the mind of Jesus when he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged," and "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The French proverb that "to know all is to pardon all," may exaggerate, but who knows enough about the determining influences in which any life has grown, to justify him in condemning another? Whatever action we have to take for the protection of society against criminals, we should never condemn them in bitterness and self-righteousness, remembering that with what measure we mete, it will be measured to us again.

VII

One further difficulty remains in dealing with sin in the light of modern knowledge. Personality is not so simple as it seemed to the makers of our inherited theology. Our consciousness to which we are attending at any moment is but a small fraction of what we are. We are the sum of all our yesterdays and of all the yesterdays of the race. In our animal inheritance we are heirs of a past tremendous in its content and meaning. Often that inheritance tips the scale in determining our actions. The life history of the individual repeats the life history of the race. This is true physically, and it is also true mentally and spiritually. That most people do not realize it and do not take it into account is due to the fact that the condensation of time involved is so great that it is difficult to believe. It takes practice to recognize in the growing child and youth the stages through which man has come in his long climb toward God.

This racial inheritance, with all the blind passion and latent memory which it carries along with it, is a part of personality, the foundation upon which it rests. Normally it is kept under fair control, but in times of stress, such as delirium, hypnosis or insanity, the animal in the soul breaks his leash. We are pushed aside and it seizes the reins of personality. Results are similar to those in the ancient myth, when Phoebus abdicated his right to drive the chariot of the sun and Phaeton trying to take his father's place brought disaster to himself, his parent and the world.

Below the threshold of our waking life or consciousness lie stored all the experiences through which we have ever passed. No occurrence was too trivial for registration there. If it be true that the very hairs of our head are numbered, it is more true that every hope, fear, thought, dream and wish that ever flashed through our minds is cared for in that mysterious abyss we call the

sub-conscious self. Every influence we have ever felt is pigeon-holed there, as is also every impression we have ever received. Although most of these experiences are beyond all ordinary recall, that does not mean they are unimportant. On the contrary, they exercise determining influences upon our conscious thinking and action. No man can be understood until we know the degree in which he can keep his sub-consciousness in hand. When we are surprised by an unusual and apparently contradictory act, such as an outburst of sensuality or temper, by a person whom we have held in high esteem, in our wonder how he could have so belied his nature, we say that it is unlike him to act in such a way. But in truth such action rang the curtain up on a hidden aspect of his real self. Multitudes of people who exhibit various forms of weakness we label sinful, act under compulsions due to wounds given their psychic life in childhood which they cannot control. They probably have no conscious memory of these injurious experiences, but these failures to adjust themselves to the moral and social order are due to the fact that they are constantly fighting in the dark "not against flesh and blood." Much insight into the workings of the mind has only recently come to light, so that it is no indication of intellectual conceit to say that we have a wider and higher outlook than that of the men who wrote the great confessions of the church. They also show how futile and unjust it is to try to standardize sins and sinners. It would not be more foolish to blame a man suffering from typhoid fever for being unable to do his share in digging a trench, than it is to censure many an erring soul mercilessly for his apparent violations of the moral law. His sin may represent a defeat after he has put up a heroic battle against great odds rather than a wanton disobedience and its right treatment may require all the sympathy, patience and wisdom the most expert physician of the soul can bring to bear upon the case.

VIII

When these considerations are taken into account it is evident that men can no longer give way to the abandonment of remorse and guilt which caused them so much suffering in bygone generations. If I am in part what my inheritance has made me, since I had no control over that inheritance, common sense will prevent me from feeling as discredited as though the entire responsibility for my condition rested upon myself. If in addition to my inheritance my environment in my early formative years indelibly marked my character and subjected it to an evil strain or warp, my feeling of guilt will not be so overwhelmingly crushing. This is the situation in which we stand to-day. One cannot imagine a modern congregation being moved with such fear and repentance as the hearers of Jonathan Edwards at Northampton when he preached his famous sermon—"Sinners in the hands of an angry God." Men know that they are sinners, but they do not believe that their deplorable condition is entirely due to themselves. Instinctively they are disposed to plead the doctrine of contributory negligence against the vast invisible tide of destiny for making them what they are. It is safe to affirm that the old intolerable sense of guilt born of the belief that the sinner had committed a series of offences against God, too terrible for forgiveness, will never again become characteristic of the Christian outlook. Psychology has undermined our trust in that version of sin and guilt and it can never be restored.

IX

While I have pointed out the danger of dogmatic judgment upon sin and sinners, and have shown why the sense of sin is less intolerable today than formerly, this does not alter the primary fact that sin is the great scourge of the race. It never sleeps at its work of defeating man's fairest promise. We have explained how

majestic man is by nature, how sublime his powers, sharing, as he does, the very nature of God whose thoughts he thinks again.

The Peak is high and flush'd
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

But in man's eminence lies his gravest danger. The animals do not sin. The possibility and dangers of sin are the conditions of our spiritual liberty. An Eden from which there could have been no possibility of expulsion, would have been an Eden in which no credit was due its untempted and untemptable inhabitants. Without the possibility of vice there can be no virtue. Sin is a coefficient of responsibility.

Every power of man can be used for good or ill. The motor car is a chariot of mercy as the physician uses it to hasten on his errand of relief to the fevered bedside; it is a vehicle of crime to the bandit who uses it to escape. What is sin? It is too complex for definition, but we can say that selfishness is always at the bottom of it. If I am using my talents to make use of others for my own profit and pleasure alone, I am transgressing the most fundamental of all God's laws. The more faithfully we strive to be unselfish, the less of sin is there in us. And while we can never escape entirely the errors due to ignorance and those deflections from the path of righteousness due to obscure and unknown causes, if we avail ourselves of the help offered to us, we can free ourselves in surprising measure from the deadly clutch of sin. But this is to anticipate.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE INCARNATION

I

Among the many experiences of our younger days was our introduction to the mysteries of grammar. Our teacher in that subject used to set us a difficult task, in requiring us to separate nouns into their two classes. We were told that some nouns were concrete and some were abstract, and we had to determine to which group any given word belonged. At the outset it was baffling. Even before we had the key, however, we often guessed the answer without knowing the reason. But there came a day, by that subtle alchemy which takes place in the brain, as it ponders upon any problem within its reach, when a flood of light illuminated the problem which had hitherto been so confusing. In our first joy from this revelation, and the sense of wisdom it gave us, we felt that the teacher might exhaust the dictionary without causing us to stumble or hesitate in deciding in which list any given word should be placed.

For we had learned that a concrete noun is a symbol for something that can be handled, measured and defined. Here is a box. It is real, for I can see it, feel it, name its color, and by means of a rule, give its exact dimensions. I can also tell of what material it is made, whether the workmanship is good or bad and I can give some idea of the use for which it has been manufactured. For practical purposes this is all that is necessary for me to know, though there are many things about the box which are still beyond the utmost fringes of our knowledge. I do not know the number of electrons and ions its material contains, nor where the tree grew out of which it has been formed, nor the men who cut it down, nor those who

transported it to the river upon which it was floated to the mill. Nor do I know the men who sawed it into boards or loaded it upon the train that carried it to the city where it became a box, nor can I compute the number of hands that took part in its making before it was completed. Yet I can safely affirm that my experience with boxes, in spite of such limitations, justifies me in assuming that I have a working knowledge of them.

In the case of abstract nouns, the solution was not so easy. Here there is nothing that can be touched or measured, as they do not represent things. They are symbols of qualities and they always subject the mind to a greater strain in the handling than concrete realities. Truth, justice, love, virtue, vice, wisdom, light and darkness are abstractions. It is a very difficult task to define them or describe them. In fact it is almost impossible to do so satisfactorily. If we make the attempt we soon find ourselves floundering in a quagmire of confusion. The moment we finish building a verbal fence around such an idea as truth, we learn that we have left a hole through which the essence of our thought can leak away. Even the philosophers fail in the definitions which they make, or at any rate, they do not satisfy us for we feel lost as we try to follow the trails of their reasoning.

Here common sense comes to our aid, and establishes a working principle for our minds to use. I do not know what truth is any more than Pilate, whose historic question was anything but foolish. But I recognize some things as true or truths. That two and two are four is not subject to debate, nor is the affirmation that man is mortal, so far as his life on this planet is concerned. Both of these propositions are confirmed in my experience, and I am convinced that they harmonize and agree with reality.

By the same method I learn the meaning of love. I cannot define it but I can point to a little child rushing in her grief to her mother, and throwing her arms about

her neck. That is an instance of love, as is also the reciprocal attitude of the mother to the child. Beauty is another quality that defies subjugation by words however neatly woven. If I hold a rose in my hand, however, and say—"this is beautiful," a child will understand my meaning and also follow my thought when I say "beautiful" and point to the clouds around the setting sun breaking the white light that has crossed the immeasurable distances of space into the splendors of the rainbow.

II

Different though concrete and abstract symbols may be, there is one underlying similarity between them. They are alike in that they are both after-consequences of an idea. Before the box of which I have spoken came into being, it existed as a picture in some mind or group of minds. The same is true of the ship upon the sea, the motor car upon the street, a book or house or anything that man has made. If this is true of those objects which owe their shape to man's creative touch, surely it imposes no strain upon our faith to infer that this universe of which our earth is but an infinitesimal particle, is an after consequence of an idea in which the processional of the stars took their proper place, and all the order, beauty and precision of our own and other worlds, as revealed by microscope and telescope and other aids to knowledge. To whose mind did the idea belong that took concrete form on so infinite a scale? There is only one answer. The universe has its origin in the mind of God. The system of nature, animate and inanimate, is the projection of his mind. Man also is an expression of God's thought upon the loftiest plane we know.

In the light of the facts within our reach, it is impossible to tell how long man has lived upon the earth. Scholars vary widely in their opinions, from 25,000 to 500,000 years. But we know that man has never been

satisfied with himself. There is no difference of opinion on that point. All through the countless generations, he has been seeking a better city. And while at his best, he has lived nobly and given expression to sublime ideals, it is evident that the creative purpose never rested content with his highest achievement. The noblest faith and aspiration of psalmist and prophet still remain an ideal rather than an achievement. To do justice, to love mercy and walk humbly with God as a motive of life cannot be surpassed in theory, but it does not prove its vitality until it has found or made "a local habitation and a name" for itself in terms of character and conduct. Men living on a low ethical and spiritual level would agree that righteousness, mercy, truth and love are desirable qualities and should be practiced. Disagreement arises when it becomes necessary to gain their consent to put them in action.

III

Such considerations afford us the key to an understanding of the incarnation. To realize the divine purpose for man, it was not enough that he should know theoretically the necessity of loving his fellow men, of being kind, generous and good in all his dealings with them; of having faith, purity of heart, moral courage, self-control and every other virtue. Many have even falsely believed themselves in possession of these qualities for their lives gave no indication of superior worth to their neighbors. So it was that in the fulness of time, a child was born who was to be known under the double title, Son of Man and Son of God. He was to incorporate in his person and character all those divine qualities which hitherto had either been floating about in ordinary men's minds as abstractions, or ideals, or had only found meagre expression in lawgivers and prophets.

There has been no valid occasion since for dispute as to what God's purpose is for man. It is definitely and

finally set forth in Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." The divine ideal is a social order in which every member of the commonwealth will be a vehicle of Christ's spirit and a reincarnation of his purpose: "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If we would learn what love for mankind is, there is no excuse left for idle arguments or disputes. Christ is love for mankind. All his teaching is an exposition of himself, a commentary upon himself. If we wish to learn with certainty our personal or national duty toward other races and nations in distress or in darkness, the parable of the Good Samaritan indicates the one door of action open to us. If we would learn the right attitude to adopt toward the man or woman who has lost all self-respect we have the key to the answer in the words, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." If some poor broken soul wandering in the far country of passion and disillusionment comes to us asking the way of life, we have only to refer him to the parable of the Prodigal Son. How simple and definite all this is! We do not need to confuse the questioner by referring him to any creed or formula. All that is required of him is the will to arise and go to his Father, who will meet him while still he is a great way off, and give him a royal welcome. Thus, every honest question concerning faith and conduct finds a clear answer in Christ.

IV

The preceding argument leads up to the explanation of one of the most pregnant of recorded utterances. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Upon the principle enunciated in those words, the entire Christian fabric rests. The dynamic of the gospel lies in the twofold

presentation of that Word, first and most important in terms of personal embodiment, and secondly in words that are spirit and life. It is futile for critics of Christianity to point out that in the Old Testament and other literatures, a parallel for every statement of Jesus may be found, and that there is nothing distinctively original in his teaching. For there is a world of difference in carrying power between the two. The essential distinction between him and other teachers lies not in the content of their respective messages. He not only spoke the truth; he *was* the Truth. I can preach and tell men to be pure, honest, bold and merciful and just, but in my most egotistical moods, I dare not claim that they would be safe in following my example. Christ is the Son of God with power because he is the perfect embodiment of the truth of God which he proclaims.

The essence of that truth is love. Jesus came into a world full of suspicion, fear, injustice and hatred, and he offered a cure for every one of its ills. That cure was the recognition in theory and practice of brotherhood, since all men are the children of the same Father. Where there is such recognition, love banishes evil affections from the heart and takes their place. His gospel of love extended even to one's enemies. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," but this rejection did not affect his love for he knew that they did not understand what they were losing. If they had understood what he came to impart, they would have hailed his coming with joy.

No matter how deep his reason for disappointment or provocation, in his relations with men, Jesus was always the embodiment of love. Never did he speak severely or censoriously of a sinner, or of sins save one offence. Nor was this a sin of the flesh as we should naturally expect. On the contrary, he was popularly looked upon as a friend of publicans and other sinners of the more flagrant type. The people he castigated without mercy

were those who did not believe they were sinners at all, the orthodox respectable leaders of Jewish society. To find a parallel in our own day, this was as if a modern pastor were to censure the officers and leading supporters of his own church. What drew these stern rebukes of Jesus upon them was not the natural sinfulness they shared with all others, but the effrontery of blind men insisting upon acting as the religious pilots of their nation. They were so conspicuously deficient in humility and mercy that they felt qualified to sit in judgment on every body else. It did not so much as occur to them that this could be wrong. If we knew all that went on in Palestine in that time, we should realize better the sensation caused by the first telling of the parable of the Good Samaritan or that of the Pharisee and the Publican. The only sin that love cannot forgive is the blind lack of insight that goes with lack of love, and Jesus poured out his wrath only upon those who exhibited this fatal defect of character.

V

Thus the love of God for his children made in his image reaches its zenith in the incarnation of that love in Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Love is the matrix in which all the other virtues originate. Love is the mainspring of faith. Because he loved so deeply, Jesus gained the insight called "faith" into the goodness of God and the salvability of the human soul, no matter how unpromising its present condition. Thus Jesus looks upon the prodigal in the far country, who feels that he has lost all claim upon the forgiveness of his father, or the recognition of his friends, with different eyes. His insight of love enables him to believe that such a man can be redeemed. Establish contact between him and this insight of love and, needless to say, this new

insight exerts a tremendous leverage upon the submerged goodness of the sinner, which tends to lift him out of his evil state.

The "creed of creeds" is the ministry of Jesus when he was upon the earth. This is the only creed to which we must subscribe if we would enter into the kingdom of God. The form of our subscription is important. To be valid it must not consist of saying, "I believe," but of signing a life-long contract to undertake by his grace to be in our due degree what he was in order that what we say and do may be a help and not a hindrance to the best welfare of others. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

VI

However, we have not yet traced the incarnation to its logical conclusion. The physical body of Jesus was only the temporary dwelling place of his eternal spirit. He has not been with his disciples, in fleshly form, since his earthly ministry ended. But this does not mean that the functions of the incarnation were confined in time to the days he spent upon the earth. If that were true, it would have only a theoretical value for us. The incarnation is not an isolated event in history, but a ceaseless process of ever widening influence. In so far as the spirit and temper of the incarnation are in any one of us, to that extent we, too, are the vehicles of God's love. This is the true interpretation of the great parable in which he reveals his relationship to us: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." There is an organic connection between Christ and his friends. The life that is in him flows into them imparting to them increased health and power and returns from them to him not only unexhausted but in larger measure than it came. As the branches share the nature and the life of the vine, so the humblest Christian shares the char-

acter of Christ, and bears fruits in deeds of mercy and of love like those which he wrought under Syrian skies when he made the blind to see, the lame to walk and the dull to understand.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE ATONEMENT.

I

The Atonement is one of the central doctrines of historic Christianity. At certain periods, in fact, it has been considered by common consent the cardinal doctrine. Yet the majority of theologians and religious leaders find an increasing difficulty today in stating this doctrine in terms acceptable to the modern mind. Many preachers admit frankly that they find no place in which it fits into their thought, and therefore avoid it altogether.

Now nothing is to be gained by speaking scornfully of the mental attitude of our times. That neither modifies it nor accounts for it. Every age has its thought forms which arise and reign we know not exactly how or why but they are as much a determining part of our environment as the air we breathe. Our theological doctrines must be restated in accordance with these changes or they will be left behind as certainly as the powdered wigs of early Victorian days.

While the word "atonement" is not used in the revised version of the New Testament, the idea which underlies it finds frequent expression both in the gospels and the epistles. There is, however, no single or uniform theory of the atoning work of Christ in the New Testament. The objective of atonement is to throw a bridge of reconciliation across the gulf created by a wrong or injury. It has been commonly thought that doing or suffering something which is accepted as an equivalent is the only method of reaching this objective. In historic Christian thought, the atonement meant the satisfaction made by Christ for the wrongs done to God by the sins of mankind. The form which that satisfaction took has been explained in a variety of different ways through the his-

tory of the church. It would be a difficult task to state in terms that could be understood by the average church member the various theories of the atonement which have been held at different times or have striven for the mastery at the same time. Men have debated interminably over these conflicting theories and on several occasions the church has been divided by them.

Some of these explanations have become obviously grotesque today. For ten centuries the prevailing theory of the atonement was that the death of Christ was the price paid to the Devil for the release of mankind, since by the sin of Adam and Eve, all their descendants became his property. Later the explanation given was that since man's disobedience constituted an offense against the infinite God and so required an infinite compensation to satisfy his injury, sacrifice of the infinite Christ appeased his anger. These different theories go by various names, substitutionary, satisfaction, penal, governmental, moral influence and their several variations and subdivisions. The mind of today has difficulty in grasping the distinctions which differentiate them because we have left behind the background of experience out of which they grew. Beneath them all, however, lies the recognition of sin as universal and the idea that the sinner himself is unable to make reparation for his offense and guilt. According to all these explanations, the work of Christ was to atone for man's sin and thus to reconcile him to God.

II

The apostle Paul has a luminous phrase in his first letter to the Corinthians which may well serve to relate the underlying truth in Christ's atoning work to our immediate experience. For while, as we have seen, the explanation of a doctrine changes with our changing experiences, its essential truth is unchanging. Thus Paul's statement to the Corinthians that they had been

"bought with a price," is as true of us as it was of them. But while this is so, it is evident that the full significance of the idea he was aiming to convey was much easier for them to grasp than it is for us. It required few or no explanations or amplifications for them, because they were familiar with the practice of emancipation. Slavery was an established institution in the ancient world. Many of the first members of the church were slaves who had been captured in war or otherwise condemned to bondage. Naturally they dreamed of liberation, which was rarely accomplished in any other way than by purchase, though sometimes a favored slave was manumitted by his owner.

The Corinthians understood Paul perfectly when, to describe their status as Christians, he told them that they had been bought with a price. They had been the bond servants of sin, as surely as any slave was the puppet of his master's will. From this bondage Christ had freed them, so that now whether outwardly they were bond or free, in spirit they were the emancipated children of God. The law of sin and death no longer bound them. Their souls were liberated from the passions and the discouragements which hitherto had worked their undoing. In that ancient world the slave and the poor had few rights. This reacted upon them disastrously and broke down their self-respect. They had no proof of their native worth, until they heard the gospel message with its assurance that before God, they were the equals of their masters, and might even be their superiors. It is difficult to realize the tremendous meaning of this revelation. Men who had hitherto lived in a constant state of depression were seized with a sense of their immortal worth, and in accordance with a psychological law which is now well known, rose to the dignity of the new part they were to play. To Christ they owed their liberation, and to him their gratitude went out in

spontaneous and zealous efforts to share their freedom with others.

We need not concern ourselves overmuch as to the exact method by which this transformation was achieved. The plain fact is the all important thing and the certainty that it was due to the work of Christ, both in his life and death. For it is too narrow an idea of his sacrificing love to restrict it to the cross. We have a brief glimpse of what he renounced in the story of the temptation. All that this world has to give was his for the taking, position, wealth, power and fame. He knew that inherent in him was the strength to win any earthly prize upon which he set his heart. But he repudiated every suggestion that he should devote himself to any personal or material end, and went out as the herald of the gospel that love is insight and insight is emancipation. Instead of wealth he chose poverty; instead of honor, reprobation; instead of popular approval, condemnation; instead of life, death. He associated with the poor and lowly and became their friends, when he might have lived among the rich and great. He stood out as a champion of new truth against the ancient orthodoxies. He freed religion from the shackles of form and ceremony and special privilege, asserting that the Samaritan who does a kindly human act is a better man than a priest of the true faith who fails to take advantage of his chance to do so. He broke away from the rigid Sabbath law, and asserted that the Sabbath was made for man. He must have felt that men in general would see the humiliation involved in his poverty, yet he accepted it without a murmur for the sake of the cause so dear to his heart. And at the last the cumulative effect of his life of love failed in its emancipating work of unsealing the blind eyes of his enemies, and his end was what his friends feared and he himself anticipated, the cross.

Thus his death cannot be dissociated from his life. Throughout his ministry he was the "Man of Sorrows,"

not for himself but for the intense loneliness due to the rejection of his offer of the love that meant insight and emancipation. Apart from what he previously did and was, his death would not have sacrificial value in any high degree. The price that he paid for our salvation began in the wilderness and was completed on Calvary.

III

What Christ did for the early Christians he has also done for us, though we are apt to overlook our immediate indebtedness to him. What do I owe him? I could never answer that question in full, much less make adequate return to him. An accident befalls me on the street. I am among strangers when I am struck down by a passing car but I am not left to suffer by the wayside. Many good Samaritans begin at once to minister to me. I am carried to a hospital and there I receive surgical treatment. Kind nurses do their best to soothe my pain. If my case is difficult, the ablest physician available is called in consultation, even though I have not a dollar to my name. Nor is this because I am a Christian. I may be a Jew, a Mohammedan, or an atheist, so far as my benefactors know. Because I am a man, a child of God, the hand of Christ reaches out to me in my need and distress, through these various agents of his ministry. Throughout the extent of Christian civilization every man, whatever his color, race or faith, is thus directly indebted to him. The modern hospital is Christ at work in his ministry of healing.

Nor are my material obligations to him exhausted by such care. On the contrary that is largely incidental. Christ's spirit is the very life of the social fabric in which I live and of which I am a part. The ordered liberty which enables me to carry out my projects and develop my interests with reasonable certainty is due to influences which have their origin in the gospel he preached and the life he lived. While the present social order has many

defects, it is immeasurably better than social disorder. Its strength and stability are in direct proportion to the truth, justice and love derived from Christ and built into it by its more devoted members.

But valuable though these material blessings are, my greatest indebtedness to him is spiritual. He lived for me, suffered for me and died for me, that he might win my love and through that love of mine for him confer eternal life upon me. By this victory over temptation he assures me that I too can conquer. By his absolute devotion to the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, he insists that the highest blessedness of which my soul is capable is to be obtained, not by gaining earthly prizes, but by a like devotion to the abiding values of the spirit. By his loyalty to what is true, rather than to inherited beliefs which have done their work, he inspires me to sincerity. By his sacrificing love for those who rejected the gift of love he offered, he teaches me to rise above petulance and ingratitude, and strengthens me to go on in the proclamation of his love to men, even though those to whom I address it pay no attention to me. But above all, he teaches me to live with the horizon of eternity in view. How strange in the light of the brevity of life on earth, that we should spend so much of our energy in gathering treasures that we must leave behind when our day is done! We are like children playing on the shore of the ocean, building houses of sand which will be swept away in a few hours as the tide comes in. My answering love for him enables his love for me to interpenetrate my nature and give me perspective. This qualifies me to realize that time is but the prelude of eternity, and death the portal of infinity. Alike in his teaching, example and witness through the lives of those in whom he has lived, I owe him my knowledge, as yet only vaguely understood, that my worth depends not upon what I shall leave behind me when I leave this

world, but upon what I shall take with me. Were it not for what he has done for me I should still be living in the narrow prison house of the material. He has opened the windows of my soul upon God. He has given me by his sacrificing love rich and deep insight into hope, faith and love and the other heavenly qualities.

Thus in so far as I accept the gifts he offers me, and walk in the road that he has laid out, I am released from the bondage of darkness and sin. The more I respond to his sacrificing love, the more I partake of his nature and the more his nature can and does interpenetrate mine. In this wise, he is destined to become the Emancipator, the Master, the Saviour, of the world. His death furnished driving power to his life of sacrificing love and the grave could not hold the Divine Deliverer. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

IV

No transaction in which free personalities engage can yield its maximum profit if it be one-sided. This holds true even in our dealings with God himself. While he stands ready to give us more life, we are in no condition to take unless our stewardship of his previous largesses has led to the increase and refinement of our powers by its faithful traffic with every influence calculated to bring out their nobler qualities. In all his dealings with us, whether directly or indirectly through his various agents, our heavenly Father recognizes and respects the reciprocalness of the relationship. For our good, rather than his, although his good is also ours, he demands grace for grace, a return in kind from us for every gift he bestows upon us by his grace. Full recognition of this truth will reveal that the sacrificing love of Christ, by which I have learned to know God and have been reconciled to him, imposes definite responsibilities upon

me. Through its enlargement of my life, my obligations are increased. If I am freed from the limitations and burden of my ignorance and sin, that emancipation requires my enlistment in the crusade which will free others who have not yet taken advantage of their same privilege. This has always been recognized by alert and devoted beneficiaries of Christ's atoning work. My condition of freedom and opportunity to-day is due to a long line of spiritual ancestors who acted as his agents and sacrificed themselves as Christ's men in their contest against the powers of darkness and fought some of my battles for me before I came upon the scene. Wycliffe and Tyndale, in their struggle to give the Bible to the common people, Giordano Bruno, dying in sacrificial fire for the right to proclaim the truth as he saw it, Copernicus suffering denunciation and persecution in order to give a more adequate and comprehensive explanation of the movement of the heavens, together with a host of others known and unknown, are links in the living chain that reaches back through the centuries and binds me to Christ.

When Patrick Hamilton died at the stake in St. Andrews, he kindled a flaming passion for justice and truth in the heart of John Knox. I am similarly indebted to the Pilgrims who braved the dangers of a hostile ocean and endured every hardship to worship God according to their convictions. The men who gave their lives in thousands to save this nation from disruption, were in their own way and according to the measure of their worth making atonement for the sin of human greed, carrying forward the work of Christ in the process and mediating his sacrifice. The same is true of the millions of young men who died in the Great War to make a better world. One and all, the hosts of those who have worked and suffered to shake off the strangle-hold of error and superstition have been purchasing with a price the release of unborn generations.

This truth tends to make me the careful custodian of the values they have won for me. What was their motive? What was the motive of Christ in working and suffering for me? Surely no man is vain enough to say and think that those who labored so strenuously to push aside the curtains of ignorance and sin and buy his freedom at the cost of their blood or life, made their sublime renunciations merely to give him the opportunity to live in easy freedom. Nevertheless, multitudes who have been born to a great inheritance live the lives of spiritual spendthrifts. They would appropriate the privileges bought for them at so great a cost and do little or nothing in return. Because that cannot be done, they fritter their lives away in pursuit of trivial and fleeting interests.

When the halls of Oxford during the Great War were empty and her sons drilling for the conflict or already dying on the fields of Flanders, Professor Gilbert Murray uttered a great lament. Looking upon the wild riot of profiteering and spending in which the youth of England who were still at home were engaged, he said that they were not worthy of the sacrifice of her gifted sons. That those whose lives were protected by the blood of these young men, should be wantoning in sheer indifference to all that had been done for them, almost broke his heart. But that one-sidedness has always been the way of man in his stupidity and blindness. It was so when Christ was giving himself in his ministry and upon the cross. The world will never find peace until the atonement as an active principle which was supremely demonstrated on Calvary shall be reciprocated and become a universal motive of conduct. Once I have achieved the freedom made possible for me by the sacrificing love of Christ, my emancipation will be evidenced by the efforts I make to liberate others from the prison house of a fleshly mind.

Thus the atonement is not an isolated event in history. It is the undying heart of the whole process of living here and hereafter. While its supreme manifestation

is in Christ, it also finds expression in every consecrated life. All progress depends upon this principle. In so far as I reciprocate the sacrificing love of Christ that freed me, I advance the kingdom of God; in so far as I fall short of doing it, I retard or impair that advance. Because Christ is the vine and I a branch, I share with him in my own limited way his great experiences, purposes and achievements. The atonement unites my frail person to his infinitude of divine love. He bore my sins and shortcomings "in his own body on the tree," that I in turn, animated by his spirit, should give myself in sacrificing love to the great task of reconciling my ignorant and sinful fellows to the everliving God who is the Father of us all. This was what Irenaeus meant when he said, "he became what we are, that he might make us what he is."

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT REGENERATION

I

Regeneration has a technical and rather formidable sound. The word has largely passed out of use in modern life, even in the pulpit, which usually clings to forms of speech long after they have disappeared elsewhere. Yet the idea which this word aims to express can never drop out of our speech since the corresponding experience is an essential factor in spiritual growth. Reduced to its simplest terms it means to be born again. The answer of Jesus to Nicodemus states a law as wide in its sweep as the plan of God for the life of man. He who would realize his destiny must be born from above.

This raises two important questions, how and why? As to the first, birth is always a mystery. None can adequately explain his own coming into the world. When did I begin to exist? How did a few particles of matter, which in one aspect may be described in chemical terms, become the dwelling place of life and mind? The wisest of men cannot tell me. Yet here I am, and if I am a competent witness there was a day but a few years ago when I was not. I have no recollection beyond a certain date in early childhood, to say nothing of any time prior to the hour my parents have told me I first saw the light.

Since I am unable, therefore, to explain my first or physical birth, it is not surprising that I cannot explain my second or spiritual birth. That bit of ignorance, however, is no sufficient reason for doubting its reality. I know that my nature has changed. There was a time when my outlook upon the world and its problems was altogether different. Since then I have grown in character. I am not boasting when I say that I have more

wisdom, poise, self-control, knowledge, goodness and faith than I once possessed. How it came about that I turned from the old paths and chose those in which I now delight to walk, I cannot tell. That inability does not lessen the importance of the fact of the change. There must have been a day in the past when a power from outside myself entered my life and became a guiding principle within me; or, putting the same truth in another way, when I developed an inward spiritual directivity.

In answer to the second question none can deny the necessity for a rebirth in every man. Here is a child old enough for school. Shall the decision be left to his own inclinations whether to go or not to go? A parent would have to be sub-normal in intelligence to give him the choice. Every child requires constant pressure from above, particularly in his earlier and more formative years, or the powers within him would never develop in the right direction. His walk, manners, speech, and disposition have to be watched carefully to guard against the evil tendencies that will be sure to crop out, if his energies are to be kept flowing in the right direction. And after the best has been done for him and he has passed with apparent safety through the semi-barbarism of youth, his parents know there is no certainty that he may not yet become the victim of a rash or evil impulse. The carnal mind, the native selfishness, the path of least resistance are enmity against God. Hence the necessity of an experience which shall result in the release of the energies of the old Adam in us upon a higher plane, the sense of renewal, the process of trans-valuation by which old things pass away and all become new.

II

Since it is a universe in which we live, we may be confident that a law which we discover working in any department of life, will, upon close scrutiny, be found at work in every other department, even though it may be

almost unrecognizable in some cases. Regeneration is no exception to this rule. It works as definitely in the mind as in the soul. A friend of mine after he had spent the earlier years of his life in business decided that he would study medicine. At first he found his studies very hard as his mind had grown rusty through long disuse but eventually he got along well except in chemistry. As the second year was coming to its close, it looked as though he was to be beaten. It seemed a slavish task to try to memorize a multitude of formulas, but strive as he would, he saw no reason or principle which united them in a system. Even with the help of a tutor, he could scarcely hope to grope through what seemed to him to be a jungle of disconnected facts. Late one night, poring over a text book, there came a sudden illumination. All at once his mind was put into possession of the secret which bound in a unitary system the diverse facts which were so elusive and fugitive when he depended upon his memory to hold them. From that moment he felt an assurance as strong as his previous doubt and, to his own delight and the surprise of his teachers, he leaped to a front place in his class.

The famous essayist Hazlitt had a similar experience. As a young man he had a great love for books and little or no fondness for pictures. But one day he discovered an exhibition of old Italian Masters which had been sent from Paris for sale in London. Its effect upon him is best described in his own words:

I was staggered when I saw the works there collected, and looked at them with wondering and longing eyes. A mist passed away from my sight; the scales fell off. A new sense came upon me, a new heaven and a new earth stood before me. . . . From that time I lived in a world of pictures. Battles, sieges, speeches in Parliament seemed mere idle noise and fury, 'signifying nothing' compared with

those mighty works that spoke to me in the eternal silence of thought.

Henry Adams had a striking experience of the same nature while a student in Berlin in the early days of his long continued quest of an education. Up to this time he had believed Beethoven a bore and that his opinion was shared by every one except musicians. One day while sitting at his table in a beer garden, he was surprised to notice that his mind followed the movement of the symphony the orchestra was playing. He could not have been more astonished had he suddenly read a new language. A prison wall that barred his senses in one great region of life suddenly fell of its own accord, without so much as his knowing how it happened. From that day on, his appreciation of music increased, though many years were to pass before he was able to enjoy the "Götterdämmerung."

III

Doubtless everyone who has attained to some degree of mastery in any of the arts or crafts has had the same kind of experience. Some one eventful day he awakened to a sense of power hitherto unknown. Yet however swift its coming, such an access of ability is never to be disjoined from the past experience of the person. Its explanation lies in part in his previous activities. The man to whom the secrets of chemistry were suddenly unveiled, would never have had this revelation were it not for the sustained hours of toil in which he laboriously laid the foundations for his later structure of knowledge of that science. For years Hazlitt had lived in an artistic atmosphere, and Henry Adams had long been hearing music.

Such facts suggest the conditions preliminary to the spiritual experience of regeneration. For while regeneration is something we can not do for ourselves, it can not be done for us unless we prepare the way. In the first place

a man must be actually conscious of his need of renewal. "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Then in the second place repentance must be followed and supported by faith. Otherwise sorrow for sin is only idle grief which burns itself out in worse than fruitless emotion. Faith is belief in and surrender of the self to the beneficent control of the power of God incarnate in Christ. Where faith in its double aspect is an active principle of the soul, the ground is prepared and ready for the transformation wrought by regeneration. Then it is that God enters with the creative strength that produces the new birth. Hitherto suppressed capacities are given scope. The strengthened will is focused upon higher goals. A new light illumines everything. The newly gained sense of unity can only be explained in terms of the Spirit of God, which has created a new moral personality by reconstructing the former divided self. Such is the marvel of the new birth that finds its classic illustrations in Saul of Tarsus, St. Francis Xavier, John Wesley, and a host of others in the history of the Christian church.

IV

Sometimes this reintegration of the divided self seems to take place with startling suddenness. At others, it appears to be the final bursting into bloom of a long period of quiet growth. Even when its manifestation is sudden, we may be sure that it is the outcome of causes that have been long at work. The dramatic conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, which was the outward beginning of his splendid regeneration, was not a bolt from the blue. While hitherto he had appeared to be successful in rigidly suppressing every doubt as to whether he was right in rejecting Jesus, it was appearance only, for around that question as a centre a slow rebellion was going on and gathering strength in his mind under the threshold of consciousness. Misgivings would not down for long at a time. The vision of the ecstatic

face of the dying Stephen could not be erased from his memory. It was these smouldering fires which blazed out in vivid eruption on the Damascus road from the volcanic depths of his soul, and in the recoil of his soul he saw the heavenly vision which afterward he so faithfully obeyed. Thereafter he devoted his powers to the proclamation of the Christian gospel with the zeal he had hitherto displayed in furthering the cause of Judaism. The qualities which made him so great a force in establishing the new faith upon unshakable intellectual foundations were derived from his old environment.

Regeneration does not, therefore, render needless but shows the extreme importance of early education in morals. Conversion, the decision to change from wrong to right, can never lift a man to a higher level than the ideal which made him discontented with his old life. When one grows up in an environment in which sin is regarded in negative terms of drinking, swearing and sensuality, he is bound to think of the life of regeneration as a life from which these activities have been expelled. In reality it is immeasurably more than that; it is a thoroughgoing renewal of personality in which old interests dissolve and new ideals emerge in growth toward Christlikeness of character. But its beginning can never be on a higher level than that which was previously looked upon as the ideal. Because Saul of Tarsus was nurtured in the exalted tradition of a God who himself set men an example of the holiness he expected of them, he became the disseminator of spiritual life, mighty in vision, in mind, in spirit and in character.

The question may be raised as to whether regeneration can do anything for the man who feels that his life has always set its face toward righteousness, and thus has escaped the torturing sense of sin and repentance. The answer is that it can do much for him because his confession that his equilibrium has never been shattered proves that the depths of his spirit have never been probed. Re-

generation is always a process and never a finished act. The experience of a divided mind, vacillating between good and evil, is more acute in some persons than in others, at some times than at others. Some say they do not feel the strain between the opposing elements of personality, but it would be unsafe to conclude on that account that they are to be envied. It may mean that they are keenly conscious of the grosser offenses, such aberrations as impurity, sloth, and gluttony, and are victorious over them, but are utterly unaware of the higher sins of pride, vanity and self-sufficiency. Yet these are even more detrimental to the soul and as sure an indication that it is a house divided against itself. Hence regeneration is essential to all. The spirit of truth and righteousness must reorganize the personality before its powers can come to a focus upon the ideal and reach their full development.

V

The practical results of regeneration become evident in a variety of changes. First the disposition is transformed. Where it was indolent, sensual, or ill-tempered, it becomes zealous, self-controlled and kindly. While it is true that these results are not perfected in an hour, but are the outcome of sustained discipline and growth, there is a new set toward them as different in bearing, as the difference between that of childhood and manhood. Though the personality before and after regeneration is made up of the same materials, the combination is so different as to issue in a "new creature."

But the outstanding mark of regeneration is seen in the change of motives which control him who has experienced it. These move on a different plane. The material and the sensual no longer exercise their former despotic sway over his life. Old landmarks lose their meaning in the new world in which the regenerated man lives. But as old lights grow dim others of greater luminosity take their places. Values hitherto but vaguely

seen and understood or altogether missed take their rightful place in his esteem. He finds himself able to put into practice an estimate of human worth that takes account not of what a man leaves behind him when he dies, but of what he carries with him in those spiritual qualities which elude all our arithmetic. Gold and granite are alike to God, to whom they are both material things. Sympathy, purity, courage and love are the standards of his judgment. He who is rich in these treasures of the soul may march face forward to meet any emergency, for he knows that he has an account with God which he can never overdraw.

Baron Frederick von Hügel tells of a mountain torrent in the Italian Alps that tears with resounding roar through a deep and sunless gorge without rest and apparently without fruit. The sterility of its struggle, however, is only apparent, for when at last it breaks its way through down to sea level, it spreads out as a peaceful fertilizing river, flowing slowly and serenely through the rich plains of Piedmont. This is a parable of the regenerated life. The early passions and strains represent the dark cavernous gorges of experience through which the soul bores its way before it emerges on the wide levels of a life of mercy and love. To the superficial eye these riots of passion and willfulness seem needless and futile. Why should we be tormented with them? Is it not that the stuff of which our lives are made may be strengthened, not alone that they may withstand "the shocks of doom," but that they may become fit dwelling places of the Eternal?

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT SALVATION

I

Salvation is the central aim of every form of religion. The bushman in Australia, the savage of equatorial Africa, the Chinaman cowed by evil spirits, as well as the Mohammedan and Jew, the lowly Christian or the profound Christian philosopher, are all alike in their hunger to attain it. Essentially salvation means escape from whatever forces threaten or seem to threaten destruction. These hedge us about from our infancy, "Change and decay in all around I see." The strongest of men soon learns his frailty. There are multitudinous forces over which the consolidated strength of mankind exercises no control whatever; wind and tides and weather are always at work breaking down what man has built up with great labor. Even in the midst of all our boasted enlightenment, wars and rumors of wars, famine, pestilence and unrest are no strangers to us. Class and racial conflicts are waged in the most favoured of nations, and a brooding spirit of pessimism has settled over the modern world. Men are afraid of the future. They do not know what they ought to do to be saved. In their perplexity they fix upon this or that as a cause of their troubles.

It is, however, in our more restricted and direct personal interests that we are most acutely conscious of the need of salvation. We gain no abiding sense of security from any earthly safeguards that we can rear for our protection. We know that the Greek proverb is right in affirming that "security is mortal's chiefest enemy," because as a rule it is built on the sand. To-morrow ill health may strike us down. Our cherished plans may come to naught. Disappointment is a constant source of

embitterment. And so the heart of man is always reaching out for a peace and assurance that nothing temporal can satisfy. The desire for salvation is the mainspring of religion.

II

What is salvation? We know that the subject occupies a large place in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New. The Psalmist plays upon this theme with constant variations. "He restoreth my soul." When my inner life is shattered because of the collapse of hope, when trouble has done its worst, the Lord builds again the broken structure, and gives me confidence even amidst the shadow of death. He is my light and my salvation making me immune to fear. He who is clothed with honor and majesty because of his love and care for me will come to my defense. He is always ready to restore to me the joy of my salvation and to uphold me with his free spirit.

In the New Testament this assurance is even more strongly emphasized and the reasons for it are clearer. The purpose of Jesus was to save the lost. While he rarely used the word "salvation," the idea which it expresses found frequent place in his teaching. Three of his parables illustrate it with singular lucidity. These parables teach that there are degrees of lostness. The first of these is that of the lost coin. The woman who owned this piece of silver, lit her candle and swept her house carefully and sought diligently until it was found. The coin was in the house. She knew that. If she had dropped it upon a crowded street in Jerusalem, her loss would have been irretrievable and search therefore useless. The second parable illustrating this process of salvation is that of the lost sheep. The owner having secured his other ninety-and nine in the fold, goes out into the wilderness to seek for the one that has strayed. Here also the quest is successful and the wandering sheep is restored to its

place in the flock. But again the lost condition was not absolute or a successful quest would have been impossible. If the wanderer had fallen a victim to a wild animal all search however diligent would have proved fruitless.

The third and greatest of these parables, however, which are all recorded in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, is that of the lost son, so typical of many another human life. This youth had wandered far away and had sunk to a nameless state of degradation. Realizing his condition, he decided to return to his father who received him while still a great way off and restored him to his place in the household. No sublimer or more consoling words ever fell from human lips than these which carry a message so rich in hope for multitudes who have wandered from the paths of rectitude or fallen into the abyss of sin. All such are lost and salvation is restoration to their rightful place.

III

Let us ask more specifically, from what are we seeking to be saved? I look to my fellows for an answer, as their motives will probably throw light upon my own. Recently M. Coué visited the United States. The interest displayed by millions in his message was intense. No conquering hero returning to the land that sent him forth, could have received greater attention. No preacher of spiritual values in all the world could hope for such a reception and such help in the continued proclamation of his message by the daily press and all the other instruments of publicity. It is safe to say that the greatest constructive scholar or scientist, a Pasteur or a Metchnikoff, would not have aroused a modicum of the interest aroused by M. Coué.

What is the reason for the difference? It is due to the agonizing desire of people to have their bodily ailments cured. Let any man of promise arise, however much of a quack he may afterward turn out to be, who assures

healing to those who are suffering physical deformity or pain, and thousands will flock to him. This almost panic-stricken search for health accounts for the vogue of Christian Science. Its primary promises are to the body rather than to the soul, and therefore, in spite of its thoroughly unscientific temper and its flagrant denial of several of the essential principles of the Christian gospel, it has won the suffrage of a multitude who have been brought up in the Christian church. Whatever the form their search for release from pain may take, after every fresh failure men are usually ready "to try something new" to escape from it.

In the second place, men seek a way of escape from anxiety. We are afflicted by disturbing fears. The future often throws a dark shadow across our pathway. What will bring confidence to those of timid temper who have lost their nerve as they have watched many of their neighbors go down under the strain and drop from the ranks? Here nature exercises a strong curative ministry. The threat of disaster always hangs over the bird in her nest. When an enemy appears she is all aflutter with excitement. But when the danger passes, she is soon happy again. It is the same with man up to a certain point. Man, however, has what the bird has not, both memory and meditative power which enable him to understand the formidableness of the forces arrayed against him, so that he is often intimidated by the fear of destruction even when there is no indication of danger. There are multitudes who never escape from this shadow.

The third evil from which men seek release is sin, or rather the consequences of sin. A few years ago, Sir Oliver Lodge made a statement which aroused widespread comment, to the effect that in our generation men are not worrying about their sins. This is unquestionably true, but it is probably equally true that they never did. The conscience of mankind is as keen in this age as ever in the past. If Sir Oliver had said that men to-day are not

worrying as they once did about the consequences of their sins, he would have been nearer the mark. Our ancestors had a much more vivid belief in future punishment than we, and consequently they dwelt more upon the fears inspired by the penal fires which they had dramatized so menacingly. This explains the appearance of intensity in their sense of sin in contrast with ours.

For all that, in the depths of their souls, men of every type seek deliverance from sin. Often this seeking is a means of instruction to them for out of it they come to learn the cause of their unrest. Even though they do not believe in a material hell, they understand that sin exacts a heavy penalty. It coarsens the texture of the spirit, deadens the sensibilities, narrows the outlook and destroys the appreciation of beauty, impairs the recognition of truth and corrodes the soul. In brief, it is death to the nobler elements in our nature. The sinner's punishment is his badness. As man becomes conscious of his sublimity as a child of God, he seeks with increasing zeal to find salvation from the control of the carnal mind which, if unchecked, will destroy his nobler qualities. In spite of all attempts to dilute the poison of sin, it remains a horrible reality from which all sane men wish to escape.

IV

The Old Testament Hebrew word translated "salvation" means broad or spacious. Later this developed into the idea of deliverance. Thus it came to mean the enlargement of the soul; so that salvation is essentially another name for growth. The man who is saved is the man who is growing in the right direction. Hence the true doctrine of salvation is growth toward the fulness of the stature of Christ. Historically the emphasis has been placed in the teaching of the church upon escape from punishment hereafter. Doubtless salvation does contain this idea of deliverance from the future ills, but it is above all a present experience. Important though it may be to be delivered

from the evils which threaten us after death, it is a mistake to emphasize this to such an extent that we overlook deliverances open to us this side of death. Obviously if we can get a vital hold upon salvation now, we may reasonably leave the future to take care of itself. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and also the good.

A few illustrations from life may serve to clarify our ideas of salvation in several of its aspects. Here is a man who suddenly realizes that he is ignorant. He chafes under this limitation and that chafing leads to a determination to secure an education. He begins to read and study. Eventually his horizons widen until he is recognized as an educated man. He is saved from his former ignorance. Here is another man who is a victim of an evil habit or disposition. Realizing the handicap which this imposes upon him, he casts himself upon God's mercy and the chains which bound him are broken. A new habit or disposition is formed. He is saved from his old nature and becomes a new man, finding joy in his release and having his usefulness greatly enhanced. Salvation is a process of enlargement which gives liberation to man's spiritual nature. It results in his transformation by the renewing of his mind.

V

Since the need of salvation is universally recognized, it is not surprising that a variety of methods by which it is to be achieved have been formulated. How am I to escape from the lost condition which I share with all men? The Roman Catholic gives one answer. I must accept the dogmas of the true church, however great the strain upon my intellect. Then the church will save me. The Presbyterian counters with another list of doctrines that must be accepted though he gives more freedom of interpretation than the Roman Catholic. The rigid Baptist gives yet another answer. Unless I am immersed I cannot be saved. The High Churchman has still another

formula. The sacraments duly administered by a priest in the true line of apostolic succession are my door of hope. But the evangelist of most Protestant churches will not acknowledge any of these methods as guarantees of salvation. He says I must accept the atoning sacrifice of Christ in the terms in which he states it. So, the plan and method of salvation, instead of being presented as a self-evident proposition which all normal minds could accept, has been a storm center around which many an acrid debate has raged. Not least among the reasons for the failure of the church to retain the respect of multitudes of people is the conviction that many of these differences of opinion are upon issues that do not go to the root of the matter.

We must never allow an erroneous or inadequate explanation of an experience, however, to cause us to deny the reality of the experience. In the case of every method mentioned, men can be found who believe that they were saved by it. Every branch of the church has its saints. Ask them the secret of their virtues and they will often fix upon what you may deem some quite accidental explanation. But a discriminating second thought will usually reveal that behind the sacraments of the High Churchman, or the particular formula of the evangelist, there lies the common experience of the love of God mediated through a consecrated personality. I have often heard persons of saintly character ascribe whatever virtue they possessed to some narrow tenet of their sect whereas the virtue of their virtue lay in the fact that it was beyond the power of this tenet to spoil. We must be careful in accepting the explanations men give of their own religious experiences. If nobility of character were enough to justify the claims of any cult for the franchise of mankind, we would be in a state of confusion worse than that which confounds us now. Every non-Christian faith, as well as every Christian sect can put forward heroic saints of apparently equal worth.

The secret of them all, realized through a wide variety of forms, is communion with God.

VI

Owing to the despotism which the dramatic exercises upon our imagination, we are apt to think that the best proof of salvation is found in the reclamation of the derelict. Now this is not to be disparaged. The power that changes a drunkard into a man of self-control and piety is of God. This is not as important an exhibition, however, of the redemptive principle as the association of multitudes of men in a stable society, the foundation of which is a more or less adequate grasp of the truth of the Christian gospel. That so many ward off drunkenness and live clean lives, is surely a clearer testimony of saving power than the fewer number of derelicts that are reclaimed. The strongest proof that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" is not the harvest reaped by the Salvation Army but the ethical level of the Christian community in general. It is far better to prevent a man from falling than to pull him bespattered with filth out of the ditch. But people are usually more strikingly impressed by the latter than the former.

This brings me to a consideration of the method of Jesus. How did he save the men who were most intimately associated with him? He educated them. They listened to him as he preached to the multitudes or dealt with a single person, such as the woman at the well. They watched him heal the sick and give tranquillity to those of fevered mind. They followed him into his retirement and found him in meditation. When the day's toil and travel were over, in the silence of the open under the starry sky, they talked with him in tender intimacy about the deep things of God. As his personality and theirs interpenetrated, each the other, their souls expanded in the process and their spiritual sensibilities

became acute. They realized that they were born to an imperishable destiny.

This was not all. There came a day when they understood that it was their duty to go out and do for other men what he had done for them. Every great spiritual discovery is followed by an urgent disposition to communicate the secret. I know a man of wide and profound knowledge whose influence is not at all commensurate with his power, because he has never exerted himself to give the world the results of his study and his thought. His inarticulateness robs him of his rightful weight in the community. Gray suggested in his famous elegy that there are Miltons and Cromwells lying in forgotten graves in many a churchyard, but mankind is none the better for their unrealized potentialities.

Jesus did not allow his disciples to make this mistake. Doubtless it would have been much more in accordance with their inclinations to remain with him in the absorbing delights and benefits of his company. But when Peter suggested to them that they continue on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus immediately told him of the necessity of going down to the plains below to express in action the inspiration they had gained above. He trained them to do his work, and sent them forth to do it, while he was still with them. In their first efforts they made the mistakes of all beginners. Their successes were disappointing. They were often impatient and discouraged. Eventually their powers enlarged, however, and these frail men became the human means by which the gospel of the Risen Saviour found lodgment in the mind of the race, and was organized in the church. Before they were capable of so tremendous a task, they had to serve a long apprenticeship in giving expression to what they had learned at the feet of their Master. While the emotions are an essential element in religion, if they had depended upon emotional effervescence solely, they would have failed of these permanent results. That is the fatal weak-

ness of popular evangelism. Salvation manifests itself in steadfast action which is permeated by the spirit and purpose of Christ.

VII

The essential secret of salvation yet remains to be told. It is an axiom of biology that life comes only from life. There was a time men thought that this was not true and that living things could be generated from the dead chemicals which they animate. In those days, scientific students used to make a solution of water and hay and after boiling to sterilize it, put it away in a jar. In a few days, under a microscope, it would be seen to be teeming with life and they rushed to the conclusion that this had been spontaneously generated. But Pasteur showed the fallacy of this conclusion. When the solution was placed in a container hermetically sealed, after it had been thoroughly sterilized, ten thousand years might pass and there would be no appearance of life. The science of modern medicine rests upon the accuracy of this principle.

There is often a parallel between the physical and the spiritual. The more abundant life, called salvation, cannot be spontaneously generated in the natural man. To be experienced, it must be born from above which is another way of saying that Christ must enter and take possession. Christ in the human soul is salvation, deliverance from the control of the lower elements in our nature, from impurity of motive, from fear and above all, from failure and inability to develop the divine powers entrusted to us as children of God. Salvation is thus a present possession and a future attainment.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN

I

Who is the Christian? There is no single generally accepted answer. Nearly two hundred answers have been given to it in this country alone, which have crystallized into institutions, each of which once did, if it does not do so still, claim to be the one repository of the truth of God. The partitions between these different churches are in most cases now breaking down. The former prejudices and jealousies have been modified. It is plain however, that not one of these churches would ever have been founded if those who launched it had believed in the Christianity of the church they were leaving. There is therefore no *Catholic* church in the true sense of that word, notwithstanding the claims made by several sects to be recognized as the one true church of Christ.

Every church with a creed or definite form of government automatically excludes others who are obviously Christians from its membership. A distinguished ecclesiastic has defined the Christian Church as "The great company of the baptized." But this definition overlooks the obvious fact that many a baptized man is a scoundrel, and sometimes an unbaptized man is a saint, as the Quakers prove. Thus every external test, whether it be subscription to a creed, baptism by one form or another, a supposed tactual transmission of spiritual power known as apostolic succession, or any formal method whatever, breaks down when subjected to analysis. Yet the mind refuses to withdraw its demand for some distinctive mark which will enable us to divide mankind into two groups, the Christian and the non-Christian.

II

Having failed to find a satisfying definition of the Christian by the traditional line of approach, let us reverse the process and see if we cannot answer the question by making our immediate experience our point of departure. If the word Christian contains any vitally distinctive meaning, that meaning will be registered in character. Unless Christianity can prove that its devotees acquire a living distinction that it calls eternal life which is not found in devotees of other faiths; we can never hope for the world sovereignty of Christ. What then are the essential qualities which together constitute the outward signs of the inward presence of eternal life in the Christian?

In order to answer this question let us build up as it were an ideal personality, whose character all sensible men will agree can be truthfully described by the title Christian. This method was used long ago by the Greek philosophers, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They looked upon virtuous character as a product of the interweaving of different and contrasted qualities into the varied and yet harmonious fabric of a perfectly developed manhood. The qualities which form the fitting materials of the "royal web" are woven on the loom of circumstance and self-discipline. The finished fabric consists of that combination of strength and courage, gentleness and kindness, daring and restraint, which constitutes the kind of man to whom the world instinctively yields its homage.

III

I realize that in assembling the virtues which should be wrought into the make-up of Christian personality, I am likely to overlook qualities which others would regard as essential. Such an assembling is sure to be more or less arbitrary owing to differences of experience and temperament which characterize those engaged in it. How-

ever, the inadequacy of my treatment should in no wise invalidate the method, for it only claims to be suggestive. It will best accomplish my purpose if it prompts the reader to fill in the details which are lacking, or to restore the perspective where the picture is out of drawing.

The first and most fundamental of all the elements of Christian personality is integrity. This is indeed so basic that it should be regarded as forming the warp in which all the other qualities are enmeshed. The moral grandeur of integrity gives it a central place in the ensemble of virtues which in their balanced combination characterize the Christian.

Integrity is often confused with honesty, but it is a principle with a much wider reach. The honest man is the man whose "word is as good as his bond." The man of integrity is not satisfied with carrying out his promises. First he sees to it that they cover all the rights of the case. Honesty is opposed to direct fraud, but it is satisfied with fulfilling the letter of the law. Integrity, on the other hand, respects the rights of other men in all the relations of life, giving to every one his due whether it be property, reputation, honor, appreciation, or any other character value. The modern financial, industrial and commercial system is imposed upon honesty as a base, but it is still far removed in practice from the ideal of integrity. A social order in which integrity held a controlling place would reduce injustice to a minimum. Dividends and profits would sink to a minor place in such a system and the primary motive would be the welfare governing every plan and act of all. The true Christian is a man of integrity.

IV

Into this warp many qualities must be woven before the pattern of the perfect man is attained. Among them courage holds a foremost place. In our time we are not accustomed to think of courage as a preëminently Chris-

tian virtue. A man may be rather widely known among us as a Christian without ever displaying any evidence of moral strength. Historically, however, something very different was the rule. The early Christians were persecuted and suffered bitterly for their faith. They had to have great convictions in order to endure their social disabilities. In the time of the persecution under Diocletian, a young officer named Marinus, in the Roman army, was stationed at Cæsarea in Palestine. He was able and faithful in the discharge of his duties and was on the eve of being appointed to a captaincy. Then through jealousy one of his fellow officers charged that he was a Christian. He was called before his superior officer and having confessed that the accusation was true he was given three hours to deny his faith. Before deciding upon his course he went to a small Christian church and told the venerable bishop of his trouble. The bishop took the Bible in one hand, and the soldier's sword in the other, saying "This is your choice." Without hesitation the officer grasped the Bible, and went back to his commander saying that he was and would remain a Christian. Instead of receiving promotion he was put to death.

Men are not now persecuted for professing allegiance to Christ. In fact a Christian profession is now the easy and proper thing to make. To become an avowed Christian, which, as popularly interpreted, means to join the church, requires little or no moral courage in this and many other countries. The differences in conduct between the majority of those who profess such allegiance and their neighbors who remain aloof from the church is usually negligible. This must not be taken to mean, however, that the warning of Jesus that his followers would be persecuted for righteousness' sake has been abrogated or outgrown because the world is through persecuting Christians not only for professing but for living up to their name. On the contrary, the sacrifices of real discipleship were probably never more exacting than they

are now. In the face of the threat of physical violence for exercising freedom of conscience, a host of martyrs in the olden time met the situation in the spirit of Marinus. Eternal life showed its inward presence in them by releasing unknown reserves of strength, so that if the occasion required, they died the death of heroes.

The strength of character required to stand against a hostile public opinion is found less frequently among us than when, in days of old, obscure men and tender women were found who were faithful unto death. Few exhibit stamina enough to endure the temptation to compromise to save a threatened income. There are many evils which are now undermining the foundations of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men, and great courage is necessary to withstand them. Apparently, it takes braver Christians than the average of to-day to speak out against entrenched wrong. No man can be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, let no one doubt, without a large fund of courage on which to draw in order to enable him to endure the hostility and ostracism which Jesus said would be the portion of his genuine followers.

V

Another essential element in Christian personality is a hospitable intelligence. Like courage this is not usually among us a conspicuous Christian virtue, and it is safe to say that many of the weaknesses and blunders of the church are due to the lack of this desirable quality. While it is true that a man may be highly intelligent without being a Christian, he cannot be an effective Christian without being an intelligent student of values. A large number of conventional Christians are utterly at sea when any new or strange doctrine makes an appeal for their franchise. They have not the mental strength and insight required to analyze it or to relate it to the body of truth to which they already subscribe. Hence such a cult as Christian Science has no difficulty in palm-

ing its illogical tenets off as Christian upon many cloudy-minded church people. No intelligent student of the values embodied in the outstanding truths of the Bible and their place in reason—God, man, sin, Christ, the Cross, and salvation—could for a moment be seduced by so inadequate a presentation of the gospel as that given by this cult. Notwithstanding the proverb, "ignorance is a doubtful bliss, and error a treacherous ally."

Nor is the Christian restricted in the use of his intelligence to an examination and valuation of the doctrines of the church. It must be applied to all the problems of life. A multitude of voices are constantly clamoring for our suffrage, and it is our duty to scrutinize their claims carefully before giving them our support. How readily people respond to catchwords and without investigation cry out against men or movements because they are labeled socialistic or unorthodox! Before a decision is rendered in any issue under discussion, standards of value on which we have learned to depend should be applied. Prejudice is a dangerous guide, and leads many a traveler off the trail of truth. The emotions are poor judges, but they are always ready to usurp the place of the intellect, unless they are held in with a stiff rein. The Christian is a man whose first interest is the discovery of the truth. This is a high and difficult ideal, but the practice of it proves our kinship to Christ.

VI

Public spirit is another quality that must be woven into the fabric of that perfect manhood our Lord commanded us to strive to work for in his words, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." The springs of action in every public-spirited man take their rise in a sense of human brotherhood. He may not always be conscious of it, but a love for mankind is always his guiding purpose. At bottom this motive is missionary in principle. In principle there is no difference between

concern for the welfare of our own village and the welfare of alien lands. If a man has no public spirit whatever, he is not a Christian. A Christian is loyal to the common good. He is interested in hygiene, in housing, in education, in a better citizenship, in the morale of the community. Some ask of any proposed line of action, "what will it do for me?" and others "what will it do for the kingdom of God?" The man of public spirit is always to be classed with the second of these two, and though he may not realize it, is near to Christ.

Alas! So great are the frailties of human nature, that most people are content if the streets are well paved and cleaned, and the water pure in their neighborhood. After that, they care little for the conditions in other neighborhoods or they lack the imagination to visualize the public welfare as a whole. They feel no responsibility beyond a narrow precinct. They prefer low taxes to the best school equipment and well paid teachers. How would the government fare if it had to depend for its income on the voluntary contributions of its citizens? Doubtless there would be an extensive redistribution of the taxes. Many a man would dodge his obligations altogether, and others, rich in enthusiasm, would carry more than their share of the common burden. The hope of the race lies in its men who are not content with their own well-being but find delight in giving much of their time and strength to the advancement of the common welfare. The Christian is a man of public spirit.

VII

Still another of the elemental virtues that must become a part of a complete Christian personality is grace or charm. While the more rugged qualities are necessary and good, they are not enough. Though their position was almost impregnable, many a battle has been lost by men who did not see that gentleness and tact would have saved the day for their intense righteous force.

Charm has a penetrating quality that disarms opposition and opens up the inner citadel of another's soul. The children of the world have never lost sight of this resource. They have never forgotten to make full use of beauty and grace in making their appeal for the franchise of mankind.

When the Puritans banished music and pictures from the churches, they threw away their chance of a complete victory for their cause. Notwithstanding all their splendid qualities, they lost ground which they were unable to recover and alienated many potential friends because they did not appreciate the necessity of placating those with whom they disagreed. They were not urbane. All men are susceptible to kindness, which at bottom is simply a recognition and a tribute to their worth. Florence Nightingale would never have surmounted the apparently insuperable difficulties that blocked her path continually, were it not for the charm of manner with which she approached the men whose help she needed. If those who believe that they are the official guardians of virtue were more considerate in their attitude toward those whom they accuse of breaking the Sabbath or denying the faith, their influence would be far more effective. The Christian is a man of gracious spirit, because he loves his fellow men.

VIII

There are many other qualities of mind, heart and motive that must have a definite place in the web of Christian personality. Loyalty and reverence, hope, faith, enthusiasm and restraint, each has its place in the life of the mature Christian. He lives in two worlds, the present and the future, and on two planes, the practical and immediate on the one side, and the ideal and far off on the other. But valuable though all these qualities are singly, they have not sufficient power of coherence to hold themselves together in a crisis. Under the strain of

a great temptation they would fall apart and the personality disintegrate.

Some unifying element must enter into the texture of a man's being or he cannot meet the tests of life. If that unifying element is equal to its task, even though he is lacking in full measure some of the qualities I have named, he will come off victor in his struggle to achieve the impossible. Wilberforce, Canon Barnett, Clara Barton, Father Damien are illustrations of how most benefactors of the race worked against heavy odds. This one priceless gift gave driving power to their other qualities and enabled them to overcome their handicaps. This unifying element is the most essential in the entire fabric of Christian personality, for upon its possession or absence depends the answer to the question, as to whether a man has the right to the name of Christian. I refer to the spirit of Christ. Without it no man can be a member of the chosen company of the redeemed. "If a man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." That spirit's binding power integrates the various qualities I have named and gives them abiding coherence. The answer to the question, who is the Christian, reduced to the simplest terms is this—the man whose soul is full to the point of saturation of the spirit of Christ.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

I

To have integrity, courage, a hospitable intelligence, public spirit, charm, loyalty, reverence and other virtues assembled in a personality in which they are bound together by the spirit of Christ is to approximate to the ideal in character. But what can a character of this kind accomplish? Character, however exalted, is not an end in itself. The real value of anything consists in what it does, as well as in what it is. Take a locomotive just finished in the factory. To the machinists who have worked upon it, it is a thing of beauty. The best materials, we will say, have gone into its making. The proportions are as near perfection as human engineering can attain. Yet it has not been built to look at. When the fires are kindled and the eager steam pushes the cylinders and drives the pistons, its real value begins to become evident. The wisdom and foresight of its makers are proved only when it gives a demonstration of its ability to carry a load of freight or passenger cars along the rails. This alone justifies the strain and toil that has gone into its building.

It is difficult to realize the vast amount of energy, time and thought, near and remote, which went into such a creation. What a mighty past comes to a focus in it! In every puff of escaping steam, Hero of Alexandria speaks across more than two thousand years, and a chorus of voices which include Della Porta, Savery, Papin and Newcomen, can also be heard before Watt's deep tones boom out in the exultation of victory. A myriad of others, no less necessary because unknown, swell the ground tone

as the great engine drives on, rocking the very earth, and vying with the thunder in its full-throated roar. The men who dug the iron and the coal are represented there; the men who learned how to refine the ore and mix the molten metal with carbon so that they transformed it into steel; the men who carried the ore from the mine to the furnace, and from the furnace to the factory, on to the men who gave it final form. These and a host of others standing so far back amid the shadows that we do not see them, wrought to make this engine. Their thought, labor and devotion reach their climax and find their justification in what this locomotive does as "a common carrier" for their fellows, whom they do not know and will never see.

If such labor and concentration of motive are the price that must be paid for the making of a thing without life, that will work, all the materials of which were already in existence, how much greater must have been the expenditure of time, thought and purpose that goes into the making of a Christian man! Here also multitudes have worked, dimly groping their way toward the light that those who came after them might enjoy blessings which they themselves were never to know. They laid the foundations of society. They learned the secrets of nature. They struggled to unravel the tangled skein of existence. Always they were working under an inner compulsion which they did not generate. No man creates his own Christian life, however much he may co-operate in its creation. God can not do it, however much he may co-operate in its creation. God waited for the first Adam through countless ages. And even after the creature provided the measure of co-operation that enabled him to create man and developed him to a high capacity, God had still to wait for many a century before the first Christian man was possible. Even as Hero of Alexandria dreamed of the steam engine, God must have dreamed and waited with infinite patience for the meas-

ure of co-operation from below that would enable him to make a man after the desires of his heart.

II

It is clear therefore, that the Christian man's life is a partnership affair. He is not free and unencumbered. His Partner's wishes must be considered. Duty is a stern word, rightly so. It points to God, and the interest at stake that he has in the Christian man's life enterprise.

The old moralists divided the field of duty into three spheres, covering severally a man's direct obligations to God, and indirectly to his fellow men and to himself. But this division will not stand close analysis, since all our obligations are interrelated. If I fail in my direct duty to God I fail equally in my duty to myself. Likewise if I fail in my duty to mankind, I fail also in the very process in my duty to God and self. Duty is a rigid imperative. Though it functions through our nature, it is rooted in God. Because of the investment he has made in us we must find our highest well-being as honorable men in honoring his wishes and co-operating in his further plans and purposes for us.

This, however, raises the question—what is his will? He has not told it to us in so many words but left it largely to us to find as well as to do it. Men equally sincere differ about it. The world is turned into a vast debating society as supporters of various causes and schools of thought clamorously insist that they alone know the will of God. On first consideration it seems strange that we should have been left in the dark. Why are we so confused? Why is there no clear line between right and wrong which can be demonstrated as we demonstrate that five times five are twenty-five, or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; so inevitably that there is no further argument? Is it not because there would be little virtue in doing right if the right were always plain? We are therefore to work out our own sal-

vation with the help of the divine Spirit working in us. Surely the adventure is worth the price, which is the danger of going wrong.

III

Hence it follows that the most elemental of our duties is to put time and hard work into learning how to learn God's will. The first men to respond to the call of Jesus were disciples, i.e., learners. "How can we know the way?" was one of the profoundest of their prayers. It is no easy task to learn what he would have us do. The first requirement is to recognize and admit our ignorance. Conceit of knowledge paralyzes the will to effort, and this conceit is woven into the very fabric of our being. Our opinions seem true and final because they are our own. A hostile attitude toward those who disagree with us is basic in our nature. Yet we know that we have often been wrong in the past. The multitude has often been wrong. They forced Socrates to drink the hemlock, crucified Jesus and compelled Galileo to deny the truth he had discovered. How strange it is that we take so long to learn the lesson of humility and tolerance and then forget it so soon!

Because he so clearly recognized this weakness, Jesus laid great emphasis on the need of a humble spirit.

"Blessed are the meek," but they are few. Most men are natural dogmatists. Their minds are closed to an honest consideration of such new evidence as may be brought to bear upon their set opinions. Thus the leaders of the church with rare exceptions have opposed every reform in history. Fortunately they struggled in vain in their effort to retain slavery, to keep woman servile and uneducated, to destroy the new truths God revealed through Copernicus, Darwin, and other scientists. The Christian man's first duty is to learn the divine message of his age, to understand his times, to desire the will of heaven in his relation to the future which is opening

before him as well as the past which he has inherited. But to learn things new and strange he must be ready to admit that the truth to which he himself and his party cling is only provisional and partial. This is easily seen by us when we stand on the side lines but not when we take our place in "our own inner circle." In a neighboring Covenanter church there was almost a riot last Christmas because one of the Sunday School teachers taught the Christmas lesson. The poor woman who thus forgot the principles of her sect under the pressure of the time spirit was charged with treason in adopting "the fringes of popery" by an irate group of her fellow teachers. But before laughing overmuch at them, we should look carefully into our own minds to see whether we are qualified to cast the first stone.

The path of the future leads through a jungle of unsettled questions. What is the right attitude toward spiritualism, industrial democracy, free speech, the place of woman in the church, birth control, war, divorce, prohibition, church union, the unmarried mother and her child, our relations to belated and beleaguered peoples, and many other harassing questions? Their number is legion whose attitude toward those problems in this list in which they are interested is only an emotional reaction. Their voices rise as they recite their opinions dogmatically if anyone disagrees with them. The very last thing they dream of doing is to assemble all the facts and look on every side of a question and reach a judicial conclusion on that basis. They yield completely to the primitive dislike for the new and unfamiliar and seek to discredit those who disagree with them by calling them ugly names. If a man does not believe in prohibition he is a secret toper. If he favors easy divorce he is at heart a libertine. If he questions the justice of a hysterical persecution of the labor agitator he is not a loyal American. No argument is needed to show how unchristian is this attitude. Hence our most fundamental duty is to exer-

cise the eternal vigilance required to approach every disturbing question with a calm, penetrating and reasoning mind, solely concerned to discover if possible the will of God.

Nor does the traditional reference of all such questions to the Bible as the one seat of authority solve the problem. The Bible is not a code or aggregation of rules to fit every case. It is the record of spiritual progress, over a long period of time among certain peoples, which reveals principles of conduct universal in their application. To disengage these principles from their local and temporary setting and apply them to the present situation is the Christian man's task. In its fulfilment he needs all the resources of a spiritualized reason. The final revelation has not been given; "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The Christian's duty is to approach every vexing question in a humble frame of mind, to divest himself of prejudice and the bias of self-interest. In view of the native conceit of our minds, this is an almost superhuman task, but success at it opens the door to the highest manhood.

IV

However, it is not enough to learn to know the will of God. Before "thy will, not mine" can be translated into terms of our human motive and conduct corresponding to itself, we too may have to experience Gethsemane. To do God's will means that men are to keep themselves "unspotted from the world." This is not to be entered upon lightly. The world is with us continually. It stands for the sum total of ephemeral interests which so often crowd out the permanent values. That it does not satisfy and never can satisfy the longings of the soul for calm does not lessen the weight of its appeal. The illusion that money, place and power are the best values that life offers, is the hardest thing in the world to expel

from the human mind. Theoretically men praise spiritual qualities, but only in rare instances do they choose them in preference to these grosser prizes. They pray formally, "Thy kingdom come," but their real prayers are their inmost desires and these are for prosperity, business success, health, recognition, motor cars and even the envy of their fellows. However great their professed loyalty to Jesus of Nazareth, when their turn comes to make his choice between "the kingdoms of this world" and poverty for righteousness' sake, they may hesitate no longer than he, but their decision is the reverse of his. They even look upon men who decide against the world, like St. Francis, Tolstoi, or Dr. Grenfell, as impractical or quixotic. No one need expect much recognition to-day from his contemporaries for choosing a course that involves poverty, however exalted his motive or heroic his renunciation. Few will envy him his spiritual rewards compared to the multitudes who will be jealous of the success of his neighbor in making a fortune.

For all that, the deepest instinct of the race has always prompted a saving remnant to "see through a glass darkly" the supremacy of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." A touching scene is described in Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*, where the mother of little Marius who is about to go away to school, her heart too full to speak, takes her son to her room and together they look out over the Campagna. Then putting her hand on his shoulder, she said—"Marius, a white bird which you are to carry across a crowded public place: your soul is like that." Pagan though she was, she knew that the most precious possession of her boy was an untarnished soul and she understood the difficulties he would meet in keeping it pure as he passed through the crowds. "The idols of the market place," of which Bacon speaks, would bid for his allegiance. To keep out of the toils of worldliness while living among those whose only values are measured in terms of money subjects men to a cumu-

lative pressure to conform that only the choicest souls can withstand.

And even more subtle and specious in their appeal are "the idols of the theatre," with their temptation particularly to men of talent or genius to use their powers to win popular favor. In every walk of life, and nowhere more conspicuously than in the church, success is judged by the prominence of the place attained rather than by the worth of the service rendered. Unless a man is made of the sternest stuff, he is likely to yield to the temptation to let down his standards in order to stand in better with the crowd. The popular politician, editor, novelist and preacher usually keeps his ear to the ground and dresses up his message accordingly. The Christian man, however, although he knows that the path of duty is lonely, yet does not hesitate to walk in it and give up everything to keep his soul "unspotted from the world." Universally regarded as one of the greatest artists of his time, Tolstoi threw away his art, full well knowing that he would be misunderstood by his wife and children, his friends and enemies, that he might wrestle with his invisible dæmon and win his battle against sham and compromise. The fires of a holy sincerity burn with incandescent flame in his dignified reply to the decree of excommunication issued by the Holy Synod: "I began by loving my orthodox faith more than my repose; then I came to love Christianity more than my Church; and now I love Truth more than all else in the world. And for me Truth still coincides with Christianity, and in the measure in which I possess it I live calmly and joyously, and calmly and joyously I approach death."

This is the main highway of spiritual progress. Only by a master passion for what is true, lovely and of good report can the soul be kept untarnished. Whoever is lacking in this passion is not entering upon his full estate as a Christian. What a change for the better would take

place in human society if those who hold the places of power and leadership would give their best energy to the discovery of what is right and true in every issue confronting them! But your man of the world cannot rise above ignorance, prejudice and self interest, though these are the qualities that corrupt the soul. The only way they can be overcome is through the cultivation of an acute sense of God that prepares the way for humble submission to his will. How stupid and shortsighted we are when we doubt or overlook the reality and resourcefulness shown by the divine presence in its inward ministries! Here in my study I can set up an instrument and by a little adjustment I can listen to ships signaling one another way out at sea as they pass in the night, or to beautiful music, or to the human voice in speech or story. These sounds travel in some cases for a thousand miles before they reach my ear. The roar of the city's traffic does not stifle them. Why is it that I do not hear them without the radiophone? The answer is simple. They lie beyond the threshold of my unaided ear. The very air I breathe is saturate with melody. Last night I heard the strains of a violin full toned and clear, played by a master hand. It seemed to be in an upper room of the house as I stood in the hall on the street floor, but in reality it was a hundred miles away. Only recently have I learned of the existence of these unheard melodies afloat in the air around me, though the poet must have guessed them, or he could never have spoken of "the morning stars singing together."

If it be true that a world of wonder lies just beyond the boundaries of my physical senses, a world into which I can penetrate if I am willing to take some simple pains, surely it should not strain my faith to believe in the presence within my grasp of him who made the world. And since God is the supreme reality, it is the part of wisdom to enter into such intimate relations with him by prayer, communion, meditation upon his purposes and every other

means, that my life will become tintured with his life, as a drop of water is tintured with the nature of the ocean. Such is the price the Christian man must pay for the greatest prize that life offers, a pure soul. For it unites him with all the great spirits of the ages, the secret of whose power in every case is that by enduring "as seeing him who is invisible," their faithfulness kept their souls white.

v

Character is never fully formed except in action. There is still another imperative which pushes the Christian on. He has a definite task apart from the assimilation of those personal graces and virtues which enter into the making of a pure and upright soul. The ultimate purpose of his existence is to build up the kingdom of God on earth. Beyond the home and the nation, though including them both, his theatre of action extends. Personal purity is not enough. "Patriotism is not enough," as Edith Cavell said in that luminous moment when, on the edge of the grave, she saw reality in clearer outline than ever before.

Too long men have divorced religion from great areas covered by the practical interests of life. The virtues of the Christian must be incorporated in business, politics, industry and international and inter-racial relations before the prayer for the coming of that kingdom is fulfilled. In popular thought this program is considered a mere dream. Most people, whatever they profess to think Christian service is, narrow it in practice to such things as going to church, or working in the church, whereas it covers every phase of their existence. In doing one's work faithfully, whatever it may be and however humble, the motive that glorifies the common task is the doing of it so as to further the Kingdom of God. The new earth of which the poet-apostle had a vision will never be realized until men by the aid of God's

grace give themselves whole-heartedly to its making. This can not be accomplished until their thought switches its center of gravity from themselves to the common welfare. To many this seems a far off divine event—too distant, indeed for us to bother about. Selfishness is to them a permanent part of the tissue of life. Yet there have always been and still are noble souls who realize this ideal. They find it to be the secret of happiness. They know “the way” and by their spirit and example act as its signboard to their fellows.

Even the average man possesses a latent idealism which sometimes flares up into action. When his country is menaced by the warlike aggression of another nation, he is quick to offer himself in its defence. For some reason, patriotism is a much less potent motive in peace than in strife. It is strange that men who are ready to die for their country are not ready to work for their country by striving for better schools, a more intelligent government, the care of the widows and orphans, the emancipation of the under-privileged, good housing, clean streets, playgrounds, missions and all other agencies which further the common good. These things are not all there is to the Kingdom of God, but they are a part of its framework, and in so far as a man is a Christian he will be interested in them and willing to make whatever sacrifice he can to further them. And while none can spread his own contribution over many such enterprises to advantage, a sympathetic interest in every good work is a definite duty of the Christian. That interest creates an atmosphere in which all forms of righteous action in common thrive and flourish. As long as men remain parochial in their outlook and think only of their own church, city or nation, they are failing in their duty to the Kingdom of God, which embraces every race and reaches out for the universal good. Since the purpose of God in the making of a Christian is to have a partner and an ally in establishing the universal rule of

love, unless the Christian is working toward this end he is failing in his supreme duty. Though his words have a militant ring, William Blake spoke for every faithful follower of Christ when he cried in exultant fervor:

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN'S REWARD

I

We have seen that the Christian is faced with many duties and that he heartily accepts them in all their exactingness. He is not his own and is not free in the sense that he can choose his course of action according to his personal tastes. The heavenly vision of human life as a partnership with God which is his pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, often leads him over rough roads. It is therefore both natural and right that we ask what benefits will accrue to him for the service that he renders to the spiritual commonwealth known as the Kingdom of God. Of course, virtue above anything else must be disinterested. If it seeks its own profit directly, its very nature is destroyed. Yet it is equally true that deep in our hearts there is a confidence that in the end virtue is recognized and rewarded. Though from our side the service of God is its own reward, that is only one-half of the transaction. Human relationships are reciprocal in the obligations they involve, and this must also be true of the relations between God and his children. He has not made them to be his bondservants. If they are partners with him in a common enterprise, therefore they will share with him the good that rises from their mutual labors.

II

At the outset, it is well to recognize that the reward of the Christian is not material in its nature. That a man however faithful to duty will become rich or powerful, is no doctrine of the New Testament, nor is there any

basis for it in subsequent experience. The Psalmist was unduly optimistic when he affirmed that he had neither seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread. He was speaking from too narrow a circuit of experience to make his observation of much value from a more inclusive one. "*Prosperity*," as Bacon said, "is the blessing of the Old Testament. *Adversity* is the Blessing of the New; which carrieth the greater Benediction and the Clearer Revelation of God's Favour." Yet the Old Testament offers many instances of heroic devotion to duty resulting in poverty or death. Elijah, Isaiah, Hosea and Jeremiah would doubtless all have been more prosperous if they had been men of worldly mind and left the business of reform to others.

But when we reach the New Testament, there is no room for debate. The gospel promises neither wealth nor security, at least prior to the time when all men have come under its rule. Persecution, arrest, slander, hate, prison and a cross are definitely assured to the faithful. Jesus never glossed over the difficulties in calling men to be his disciples. He did not tell them that it pays in houses and lands, in place and power to follow him. The benefits promised are spiritual in their content.

The mind is its own place, and in itself,
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

Blessedness, fulness of joy and salvation are the fruits of Christian service. To many these values sound good and they would like to have them—added unto them. But what they seek first are comforts and luxuries, place and distinction. They do not possess the depth of insight necessary to act in accord with a conviction that these things do not yield a permanent satisfaction. Instead they depend upon them for happiness. The myths of Tantalus and Sisyphus show that the ancient pagans realized that happiness can never be quite captured by a frontal attack. Tantalus, half dead with thirst, stands in a pool, but always as he bows his head to drink

his fill of the waters of happiness, they recede leaving the ground at his feet dry. Trees heavy with luscious fruit bow toward him, but as he tries to clutch the apples and figs the winds sweep them from his reach. Sisyphus is doomed to roll a stone up to the top of a hill, but always as he seems about to attain his goal, repulsed by some sudden force, it rolls again to the plain below, and he begins his task anew. Such is the punishment that comes to all who seek first their own comfort and well-being. Happily, the Christian understands that his peace of mind does not arise from nor depend upon his material possessions, if he has them. If he is poor in worldly goods, as is most likely to be the case, he does not envy those who are rich.

III

The prophet Isaiah uses a stirring phrase—"His reward is with him, and his work before him," which is well adapted to set forth, as in a parable, the principle of the Christian's compensation. He carries his reward in his soul. It is thus as living and mysterious as the life that assimilates it. One of the deepest joys of life is a sense of added capacity. To know that somehow I am equal to responsibilities which I would not even undertake a few years ago, compensates for many a disappointment and temporary failure in between. When it comes, the assurance that he has made progress compensates the musician for the hard toil by which he built up his technique, the writer for his failures as he strove to formulate his message, the scientist for the set-backs he suffered in gathering his facts in support of the speculation which he hoped would prove a discovery. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," was an assurance which sustained the apostles in their early efforts. It enabled them to remain steadfast in supporting what often in those first years must have seemed to the most sanguine to be a lost cause. The sense of added

capacity nerved them to press on again and again in the face of new difficulties otherwise insuperable. Every time their horizons widened, their confidence in their ultimate success increased. This is true of every great spiritual adventure. Columbus could never have endured his long journey into the unknown were it not for the access of capacity added unto him as compensation for his unflinching faith that sooner or later he would reach land on the opposite side of the ocean. An increase of calibre is an infallible proof that life is triumphing over death. It assures the Christian that his soul is winning its struggle against all the malign forces that threaten it with decay. That knowledge fills him with joyful hope, and renders him immune to every depressing influence.

IV

Growth of soul is, however, only the first installment of the Christian's reward. A second benefit which is even more satisfying is that peace or repose of spirit which is always a mark of the mature follower of Christ. This peace is difficult to define, as it has many counterfeits, most of which arise from a refusal to face the harder duties of discipleship. When men airily tell us to smile, to be optimists by turning our backs upon the realities of life and living in a fool's paradise, the peace they offer is a delusion. It is blindly cruel to urge a mother who has lost her child to be happy, unless we can ground her in the conviction that he still lives and one day they will meet again in a complete restoration of the broken relationship. It is both stupid and criminal to advise men to look only on the bright side of things and to close their eyes to the evil forces which are undermining and blighting the life of the community. The peace which accompanies this attitude of mind is spurious.

Nor is the Christian's peace fatalistic. A dumb resignation which accepts fate without complaint does not develop character. Bovine placidity is not a virtue. The

iron temper of Henley's ringing defiance of evil, though splendid, also falls short of the Christian standard:

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

There is no note of defiance in the peace of the Christian. His is an easy mastery over the sinister forces which strive for his undoing. He is always sure of himself as he fights against them. His peace is due to the equilibrium of his soul which arises from his harmony with God. He faces the future with equanimity, undisturbed in the face of danger and never in fear of evil tidings. Because his heart is anchored in God he is certain that no lasting evil can befall him. He is content to leave the result when he has done his best with God, and does not waste his powers in fret and worry. God is his refuge and strength, and so real a help in trouble that he neither fears for his own welfare nor for that of the Kingdom. There is a quiet confidence in his bearing produced by his certainty that in the end all will be well. He lives above the petty disasters which mar so many lives, the jealousies and conflicting interests and self-seeking which poison the springs of happiness and destroy friendship. He is free from strain because he trusts in God. He knows the inner meaning of the words, "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The Christian man's peace is thus an active and not a passive experience. It gives the broad margin to life which Thoreau said he loved. In these surroundings, the soul becomes aware of the reality and presence of the Eternal. The ordinary passions and interests of existence shrink to their true minor proportions. Little danger remains of overemphasizing those things which are of only temporary value. Time is seen to be the overture to eternity. The Christian, untroubled by frets and vain

ambitions, increases both in tranquillity and in his hold upon the future, by developing those melodies in the theme which will reach their climax only in "the city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, thus become an immediate experience, a future promise and a certain hope.

V

This assurance that the Christian man's reward in the form of ever added increments of capacity will find unlimited opportunities for wholesome exercise in the long future constitutes another installment in the return made to him for meeting the rigorous demands made upon him by his partnership relations with God. We recoil less from the thought of death than from the thought of extinction. Personality carries in its heart a sense of the sacredness and glory and permanence of life. While there are many suggestions in this fleeting world that death ends everything, the mind of man refuses to accept such a conclusion. The skeptic may build up an argument, which we are unable to answer, but we refuse to be convinced. Still we reach lame hands of faith toward the God who made us, and like infants crying in the night ask for some sign to confirm our blind faith that when we die we shall live again. It is pathetic testimony to the strength of this hunger to see men otherwise intelligent trusting to the professed revelations of some ignorant and neurotic woman who claims to be an intermediary between the two worlds. Even in this dependence, however, upon messages of trivial content, men show their eagerness to bridge the gulf between time and eternity. The longing for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still prompts them to magnify trifles in the way of evidence until they take on the appearance of decisive proof. Who dare be sure

that they are always and altogether wrong? To Noah a single olive leaf was sufficient evidence that the flood was receding, though doubtless the majority of his fellow passengers in the ark disagreed with his optimistic conclusions. To Columbus, floating seaweed indicated the proximity of land, but his sailors doubted his sanity. After scorning the alchemists for generations, scientists now admit that their dream of the transmutation of baser into more valuable elements is within range of possible achievement. At any rate, the reverse process is an accomplished fact, for as the radium atom continues to explode other lower elements and ultimately lead appear as the results of this disintegration. Alchemy was a kind of crude and illiterate chemistry and it may very well be the part of wisdom to keep an open mind toward the present crude and illiterate stage of spiritualism. There is no reason why the Christian man should decry the attempt to demonstrate that intercourse is possible between members of the church militant and the church triumphant. A multitude of stricken souls would be born again from despair to hope and happiness, if they were convinced of no more than that their loved ones beyond the grave are still interested in them and living as real a life as when they were on the earth. To have an occasional word, however commonplace, from those they loved and lost would brighten their whole existence. The Christian man should look with sympathy upon every honest effort to cross this abyss, while he exercises the strictest caution against becoming the dupe of those who do not scruple to exploit one of the most sacred and fundamental of human desires.

Nor is the argument convincing that if God wanted us to communicate with our deceased friends, or to have immediate proof of their survival, he would have related the two worlds in such a way that this would be as natural and habitual as eating and sleeping. The romance of man's achievement consists in one after another long

and successful struggle to uncover secrets of nature hidden from him. God has given us seeking minds and placed before us problems for us to try to discover a multitude of his secrets for ourselves. This is much more interesting than if he solved them for us. Who could have anticipated the telegraph or telephone before Franklin "snatched the thunderbolt from heaven", as Turgot said? Was it wrong for Morse, Faraday, Marconi and Edison to unlock doors shut from the beginning of the world until they opened them? To ask this question is to answer it. Meyer, Hyslop, Flammarion and Doyle have an equal right to open the door into the hereafter if they can. Man will never discover anything at discord with God's purposes for his life. So, it is foolish for him to set any limits for his efforts of research. If the day ever arrives when we can speak freely with the residents of the Eternal City, it will be due to our having earned the right by our discovery of the means and conditions, even as we have paid the same price for traveling through the air.

This discussion is, however, incidental. The Christian man's reward is a conviction which nothing can shake, that in so far as he is Christian he is practising immortality now. The usual approach to the problem as to whether we shall live on hereafter is set forth in the classic question, "If a man die shall he live again?" That removes its settlement, however, to a later time and renders it debatable and academic. With the Christian eternal life is a matter of immediate experience. "This day is salvation come to this house." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

The ground of this assurance to the Christian man is the added increments of capacity: the more abundant life, which has already been realized in his experience,

is the form of the Christian's reward. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." This, however, does not mean that we go out as we came in. Our qualities of mind and heart, our varied experiences, our knowledge, our faith, our love, our vision, our integrity—in short, all that makes up personality, our character in itself, will constitute the capital with which we begin our life beyond the grave. If a man has these possessions of the spirit, the Christian is confident that death does not take them from him nor impair their growth. But he does not possess them if his first thought has been money, place, or pleasure. These values are temporary. They have no carrying power to cross the grave. They yield to the downward pull of earth. They are liable to be destroyed at any time by change of circumstance. The germs of decay in them are inescapable. This is what St. Paul means when he says—"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

How different it is with spiritual qualities! Though Socrates lived ages ago, he kindles the love of truth yet in multitudes in each generation. The bright stars in the racial firmament whose names are centers and sources of inspiration are almost without exception loved and remembered because of the fruit of their minds and souls. Who cares a pulse beat for Croesus, and who is so ignorant as not to have his heart leap faster when he hears the name of Plato, or Dante, or Calvin or Luther? They quicken our nobler affections. This immortality of spiritual influence in the present world is a faint reflection of their own survival. These men must be living, or their memory would not be dynamic.

The supreme example of this principle is Jesus. His empire grows wider with each passing year. He withstands every test of critical analysis. The white light of a myriad of investigating minds is constantly focused

upon him, but ever as it increases in intensity he stands out more majestically. It is significant that in our day the exponents of Hinduism, Mohammedanism and other non-Christian faiths are striving to square their teaching with him. They see that in this path lies their only hope. The secret of his marvelous influence, so much greater since his going than during his stay, is easily discovered. The grave could not hold him. Death had no dominion over his personality. The conviction that he still lived took hold of his disciples, and as carbon in molten iron transforms it into steel, this conviction changed them from men of flabby courage and mediocre talent into heroic world figures. Only a living Christ could have wrought that amazing transformation. With hearts aflame they went out and told the story, and many believed. In three centuries they had achieved the impossible. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Galilean had conquered, because he was alive, always guiding and inspiring his disciples and nerving them to high adventure. Spirit is immeasurably stronger than matter. Sincerity, truth, sympathy and love overthrow the vast and apparently unconquerable forces of wealth and power which are arrayed against them.

There are many arguments, some of which are richly suggestive, that may be advanced to support the doctrine of immortality, but they sink into minor importance over against the rule of the living Christ. If matter is indestructible it imposes no strain upon our faith to believe mind equally indestructible. If the seed dies to live in fairer form, why may not I die to emerge as the moth from the chrysalis, in a wider world, where the faint promises of earth will be adequately realized? The heart of man in every age has longed for eternal life. Surely it is reasonable to believe that God would never have endued us with this yearning if it is doomed to remain unsatisfied. In that case it would have no ground of

justification, and man would be the idle plaything of a malicious fate, the victim of a ghastly mistake.

As the lamps of a city, however, fade out before the rising sun, these and other reasons which we assemble to support our hopes of immortality pale in the light which flows from the Eternal Christ. The Christian man knows that he shall live hereafter, because he is living now, and he knows that he is living now because his awakened soul has thrown off the grave clothes of ignorance, superstition, fear and sin, proving to him that immortality is far less a matter of duration than of spiritual vitality. Having "risen with Christ," he seeks those things which are above, and immortality is no longer a matter of speculation, but a present experience.

VI

Nor is this all of the Christian man's reward. There is still another installment due him for his faithfulness. "His work is before him." Our fathers used to talk of "going to heaven," as we talk of going to London or Paris. They thought of heaven as a place of inactivity, where the weary find solace in unending rest. But a static existence, even though it be in heaven, no longer appeals to the thoughtful mind, for it has no support in reason. Whatever form our future life may take, it will continue on a higher plane the process already begun of rewarding fidelity with increase of calibre. When we come to ourselves after we have crossed "the great divide," we shall find ourselves largely what we were before, as the student who begins his college course is the same youth who left high school a few months previously, translated into a wider environment. And as tasks and problems are essential here to the development of character, so will they be essential there. Life without work would be sterile and without zest. In that unending process of development which opens so alluringly before the man who has proved the immortality

of his own soul, the joy of service will be a constant factor. Into a wider stream of effort all his former strivings will flow and find their justification and meaning. His delight will be in going on to new and stiffer tasks. If the end could ever be reached, ennui would paralyze the soul. It is far better that each advance provide a starting point for further achievement. The climax of the Christian man's reward lies in the new fields for coöperation with God which are continually opening before him in response to the push of his growing soul.

He desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
Give him the wages of going on, and not to die.¹

¹Tennyson. Wages (adapted).

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT PRAYER

I

We have already taken the position that the only rational and satisfying foundation which we can put beneath the structure of our thought about ourselves and the world, is a belief in God. We have also adopted the position that God is the Father, and that his qualities of mind and heart have, in some degree, been transmitted to us as his children. Hence it follows that intercourse with him is within the scope of our powers however limited they may be in comparison. This intercourse is called prayer. Jeremy Taylor was wise in describing prayer as "the ascent of the mind to God." It is the meeting of man's spirit with his on a common ground of sympathy and understanding.

While prayer depends upon kindred purposes and a definite relationship between the two personalities involved, it also implies sovereignty on the one side and weakness upon the other. No being can pray to his equal. Man, in his need, turns to God because God is as powerful as man is puny. He has no other source of help when destiny sweeps him from his moorings and forces him to realize how weak and frail he is. Sooner or later, this sense of helplessness is the experience of all men. Even the strongest and most self-reliant have their periods of depression in which they become acutely conscious of their lack of adequate resources against the encroachments of pain, age and death.

Then the soul cries out for relief. Prayer is older than history and co-extensive with human life. All men pray, even those who never do so formally, and, therefore,

assume that they never pray at all. Prayer is thus a common thread which runs through the substratum of our lives, uniting us with the bushman of Australia who cries blindly to his divinity for revenge, and with the Moham-medan, who five times a day kneels with his face toward Mecca.

II

Prayer has in the course of time, like a mountain stream, worn out for itself certain channels of expression. The first is adoration, the recognition of God as living, personal, holy and supreme. The Psalms are preëminently the literature of adoration. "Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless his holy name"; "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him"; "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations"; "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne." Back of these sublime utterances, there is awe-struck recognition of the infinitude of the power that made the universe. They point to mingled feelings of mystery, wonder and awe in the presence of such majesty and glory. Never far away, also, is a sense of self-abasement at the contrasts of our own littleness with the transcendent majesty of the Creator. Instinctively the soul as it bows in reverence before such power, passes by a logical transition, to the striking moral difference between the divine righteousness and wisdom and its own spiritual poverty. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Only in the recognition of the moral splendor of God do the streams of true prayer take their rise and attain the initial momentum required for the more intimate blessings which it offers. I know something of prayer because in its highest moods my soul thrills with adoration.

III

A second channel or outlet for prayer is thanksgiving. We are the constant recipients of God's favor. In fact we are dependent upon his grace, his free outpouring of himself for every blessing we have. He has given us life and hope and promise of richer joys to come. Our mental outlook, our spiritual experience, our sense of worth, our growth in character, our homes, friends and loved ones, are all due to him. A momentary withdrawal of aid on his part would result in immediate disaster to us. Our present and future welfare are entirely dependent upon him. Prayer overflows in thanks and appreciation of his gracious kindness towards us. It is strange how any man can take these blessings as a matter of course and give no evidence in thought or action that he is conscious of any indebtedness to him. In our human relations, ingratitude is rightly considered a despicable trait. To accept benefits conferred as our right, overlooks our obligations to our parents and teachers and other benefactors. "Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude" is a hard but true indictment of our unregenerate human nature.

IV

Confession is a third channel or outlet for prayer. "Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me"; "Forgive us our debts"; "God be merciful to me, a sinner." These penitential cries evoke a universal response. They express the sense of discord which is felt within by the normal mind. Regardless of the theory of human nature which he holds, every man knows that he has sinned and that he is prone to evil. Only those afflicted with mental shortsightedness believe that they are either free from sin or can become free in this world. Some few boast of "the victorious life," meaning the attainment of a state of perfection, but that is manifestly impossible. The great heroes of

the faith never believed that they had reached the end of the gospel trail. On the contrary, a deep sense of humility characterizes them and their self-appraisal. St. Paul regarded himself as the chief of sinners. Dr. Alexander Whyte, a modern saint, was wont to describe himself in terms so dark that we would feel them exaggerated if applied to the worst criminal in Edinburgh, the city of his splendid ministry.

It is a sure mark of spiritual immaturity for any one to claim that he has done his full duty. Sometimes we hear a man calling attention to how kind he was or generous in a given situation and we always discount his words for we know instinctively that virtue loses its bloom the moment it becomes self-conscious. Particularly is it true that in the presence of God, the substantial soul becomes aware of its defects and is prompted to cry out for forgiveness. I know something of prayer because I am often in the valley of humiliation and as I recall "the petty done, the undone vast," I echo the despairing words of St. Peter,—“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

v

A fourth channel or outlet for prayer is meditation. While we can have meditation without prayer, we cannot have true prayer without meditation. When Jesus went apart into the silent places to hold communion with his Father, doubtless he prepared himself by meditation for that free and intimate intercourse with God which marked his life and so largely explains his power. During his earthly ministry, his strength was under a constant and heavy tax, yet we have no record of his ever being ill or suffering from nerves. The explanation lies, at least in part, in the fact that he never drew too closely upon his margin of reserve force. When it began to run low, he went to a place remote from men to ponder upon deep and eternal things. And just as a cistern is filled after

a drouth by the falling showers, so the heavenly dew of God's favour filled the dry places, freshened his half-wearied soul and gently bore him into the presence of God. Then with recreated strength, he went forth again to tasks impossible apart from contact with this inexhaustible supply of power.

Our western civilization needs to learn the alphabet of the art of slowing down into meditation. Speed has become a mania with us. We are always in a hurry. We do not know how to be quiet. Our pace maker is the whirring machine, the Iron God. People think there is something wrong with us, if we are not keeping up with the hurrying throngs composed of fevered souls who do not know why they are in a rush. Our nerves are in a constant turmoil. We are so busy that we have no time left to spend in the company of the supreme interests of life. The crowded columns of the daily paper constitute the bulk of our reading. What we must remember is that without meditation, prayer degenerates into an occasional emergency S. O. S. No one who is out of breath can commune with God. If we have no time for him, we will not let him have any time with us. Equilibrium of soul is essential to our approach to the throne of grace. That alone gives the steadiness of vision which we require to see his purpose. I know something of prayer because through meditation I have been privileged to enter my Father's presence.

VI

Still another channel or outlet for prayer is intercession. Speaking broadly, this means entreaty for others. Every devout mind is perturbed in some degree by the world's deep need and this concern finds expression in appeals to God to bestow the blessings necessary to meet this need. At bottom, intercession is firmly based upon the doctrine of human solidarity. We pray for others

because we recognize in them our own kin, children of the same Father and therefore our brothers. Our hearts go out to them in their pain, ignorance, superstition and sin and in our sympathy we ask God to open a way out for them from their darkness. Because we are vitally interested in the growth of righteousness, peace and goodwill, we are prompted to pray that these blessings may be established in the hearts of our neighbors, in the life of our nation and over the world. For the same reason we ask that the day may be hastened when those who have had no experience of the meaning and redemptive power of the gospel, may enjoy its uplifting and creative influence in their lives.

Both the Old Testament and the New contain many examples of intercessory prayer. Once in the lifetime of every priest, it was his most exalted privilege to enter the holy place as an intercessor in behalf of the people. The supreme function of the high priest's office was to enter the Holy of Holies once a year and, after making atonement for his own sins, to act as the people's representative in their access to God.

The idea of intercession is also dominant in the teaching and example of Jesus. In the "*Our Father*" of the Lord's Prayer, brotherhood is clearly implied as well as in the petition, "Thy kingdom come." Even in his prayer for his disciples on the evening of his departure, it is a reasonable inference that those whom the disciples would turn into paths of righteousness were equally in the forefront of his thought. This inference is confirmed by his command that his followers are to pray for those who use them despitefully and by his own intercession for his enemies in his almost dying breath, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." I know something of prayer, because my heart goes out to others in their distress, and my instinctive cry to God is to bless and sustain them in their extremity.

VII

The last channel or outlet for prayer that I shall mention is petition which is popularly regarded as constituting all there is of prayer. In truth it is a comparatively small part of it. When the soul is in full communion with God, the last thing usually emphasized by us is our own immediate needs. This is illustrated in our relations with our friends. We hesitate to ask favors of those with whom we are on intimate terms excepting when our need is urgent. This is due to a sure instinct which recoils from exploiting those whom we love. If a friend were elected President, I would not hurry to him to ask a personal favor. When Ik Marvel, the author of "Reveries of a Bachelor" and "Dream Life," was in serious financial straits and believed that he would have to sell his beautiful home, Edgewood, near New Haven, friends offered to help him but he refused. Unless it was unavoidable, he could not bring himself to denature his friendship by the least suspicion of trafficking in it.

In the attitude of the highly sensitive soul toward God, something of the same restraint appears. This does not mean that we should hesitate to ask him for material help or that he disregards our personal needs, since we are to pray for our daily bread. Rather we should remember that our communion with him yields many blessings of an immeasurably higher type than material benefits. I value my friend for his affection, sympathy and appreciation of my personality far more than for the help that he can give me when I am in distress, though I know that such help will be gladly given if I ask for it.

In like manner, I value my intercourse with God primarily because of the vision, faith, blessedness and inspiration it yields. When these gifts are used aright, they go a long way toward fitting me to meet and conquer any change of circumstances. True, disasters often come

out of situations beyond our control bringing pain and danger, and it is a joy to know that I can turn to God with the same confidence that a child turns to his father when in trouble. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Nevertheless, we should never forget that it is impossible for us to understand the divine methods and purposes fully. Our Lord in his extremity prayed that the cup of sorrow might pass from him. Yet he added significantly, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." This restrictive clause should be a part of every petition for a personal benefit. If the Father could not grant every prayer of Jesus, it is not surprising that he may be unable to grant one of ours. Nor can we be certain as to what is best even for our immediate selves to say nothing of the larger purposes to which our lives must be adapted. These considerations do not mean that we should hesitate to express our longings, however, but that we should not be disgruntled if the answer be not in the terms of our desire. For every true prayer is answered when it finds its way home to God's heart of infinite love: this is known by the strength which the answering response of his presence quickens in the soul of the petitioner.

Thus the books that are written from time to time on the theme "*Does God Answer Prayer?*" are superfluous or even worse, for they approach the question from the wrong point of view. If we appeal to Cæsar, to Cæsar we must go. If we base our argument in favor of prayer upon apparent specific answers to prayers for particular blessings, we open the door to the skeptic to counter by formulating as formidable a list as he can of cases in which there was no apparent response. This method lets the issue down to too low a plane. When we remember the essential attributes of

prayer, we cannot be diverted by futile controversies as to whether the petition portion of prayer is answered or not. Through our intercourse with God, we have settled the whole question of prayer finally. As a result of knowledge born of our living experience, we can say with Tennyson, whether our requests for particular favors are granted or not, that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill," even of our own personal pains and misfortunes. I know something of prayer because though I am often denied the particular boon for which I yearn, I am confident that my Father sympathizes with me and understands and answers me in his own way for my highest good.

VIII

It is, however, one thing to know what prayer is and quite another to be able to pray. For prayer is an art as the disciples understood when they said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Prayer can no more be achieved incidentally than great music or literature. If a man has neglected to pray for years, his intercourse with God will be spare and halting until he masters the art of communion. Strange as it may sound, when first stated, only an athlete in concentration can go very far in prayer. One might as reasonably hope to play a musical instrument without training or speak a new language as to pray effectively without previous discipline. Hence we need constant exercise in the absorption of prayer. Spasmodic and panicky efforts to communicate with God in hours of severe trial or urgent need will not avail. A rich and mature religious experience previously attained through the habit of frequent and sustained intercourse with God is indispensable. Friendship with him is not essentially different from friendship in our human relations. We cannot speak to a stranger with the easy intimacy which marks our conversation with our friends. It takes time to break down the barriers of restraint and make us feel

at ease in one another's presence. The sense of being "at home" with God is equally necessary and much more difficult to gain. Yet it must be achieved before we can have the calm and assurance which are the fruit of intimate converse with him.

There is, however, no other exercise or discipline in which we can engage that turns out so intensely satisfactory. Prayer makes the small man large and transforms the strong man into a giant. If the general run of people only understood how much they are missing in neglecting the art of prayer, an immediate revolution would take place in their habits. What exercise is to the body, prayer is to the soul. It cleanses and invigorates the spirit. It opens doors into the infinite and in its light simple experiences expose eternal values. It releases hidden powers and harnesses the mind to exalted purposes. It enlarges the vision by pushing back the boundaries of time and sense until earth fades into heaven. It is an almost certain protection against the pull of temptation. The man who prays steadfastly not only gets more strength out of himself than he otherwise would, but in addition, his contact with God puts him in touch with inexhaustible stores of power.

We sometimes wonder how a certain few men obtained the unique strength by which they overcame apparently insuperable obstacles. How was it that St. Paul, Luther, St. Francis Xavier, John Wesley, General Booth and Dr. Barnardo were able to withstand the forces of hostility and indifference arrayed against them on so colossal a scale? They never did it in their own strength. Is their secret remote? Because they were men of prayer, the tides of the Eternal Spirit of our spirits, flowed through their lives, as the electricity that flows through a drill enables it to bore a hole through a steel plate. And the glory of our relationship with God lies in the fact that he is equally accessible to all on the same conditions.

None of these men had any favoritism shown to him in his approach to the sources of strength.

Every one of us longs for power. Who does not wish for greater strength, body, mind and soul? The tragedy connected with our weakness lies in our failure to draw upon the credit that has been established for us in an inexhaustible storehouse of spiritual energy. Connection can always be made with it by any one who has mastered the simple art of prayer. It is available at all times for direction into the channels of noble conduct, finer sensibilities, more intelligent citizenship and Christ-like character.

IX

That I have not mentioned the objections raised by those on the outside in regard to prayer, which in one form or another also rise in all our minds in certain moods, is not due to my failure to appreciate them. It has seemed better to let my positive experiences speak first and show in that way how difficulties which seem great when viewed in themselves, will fade on trial into minor importance. That always takes place when a man perseveres in trying to find the secret of availing prayer. With William Blake, he learns to "see infinity in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour." He realizes that the puzzling features which baffle and confuse him when he is looking on at prayer from the outside sink out of sight when he penetrates within.

A frequent objection to prayer is the contention that since God knows what we need, it is an indication of doubt or of selfishness on our part to ask him for gifts whether spiritual or material. Apart from any request we make, it is said, he will give us what is for our good. But this objection is based on a too one-sided idea of prayer. It does not take into account the full extent of action and interaction between personalities, and prayer has no meaning if God is not a person. We do not do

all the asking and God does not do all the giving. The interpenetration goes deeper far. The objection could be equally raised that a wise parent knows the needs of his child better than the child. Yet no parent could be happy if his son did not ask him for gifts and thank him for his favors. In the closer intimacies thus established, he can give ever so much more of himself than if his son were to keep silent and take everything for granted.

True prayer always results in the movement of the soul into terms of relationship with God in which blessings become possible that were impossible before. For example, when we have learned to forgive those who have sinned against us and God forgives us, the sense of divine reconciliation exercises an epoch-making formative influence upon our characters. Prayer is the main highway to new capacity to receive and appreciate blessings. Thus it must be both reasonable and right to persevere in these more intimate forms of intercourse with God or the effect of their reaction upon the soul would not be to increase its stature. Hence prayer is a chief means of spiritual growth. Through its exercise, the soul learns to thread its way into the larger meanings of life. By the inward strength of its own desires, it discovers new points of contact with God.

But the most frequent and strongest objection to prayer is that which arises from the modern scientific outlook upon life. Cause and effect from this standpoint appear to be so linked together that results seem to be predetermined and outside of possibility of change or modification. How can we pray for the recovery of a sick child if we believe that its illness is due to germs that have been introduced into its body by impure milk which must run their course in accordance with an unvarying law? In the course of his fall from an aeroplane, is not it futile for a man to pray that he will not be crushed when he strikes the ground? Will prayer prevent the wind from

blowing, fire from burning or water from drowning the man who is submerged?

The overwhelming probability to the contrary prompted Tyndall to make his famous proposal that two wards in a hospital should be selected, in one of which the patients should be treated by medical science only and in the other by prayer alone to find which is the more effective. Owing to the progress of psychology, it is safe to say that no scientific man of standing would make so crude a suggestion today. In the first place, it would be impossible to isolate any of the patients from the effects of prayer. Every mother prays for the recovery of her child and every wife for that of her husband. Supplications for all who are in trouble are continually being made by the devout so that the patients with the medical attendance would not be deprived of the advantage of prayers for their recovery.

The reply to this scientific objection is that answer to prayer does not necessarily require any abrogation of the laws of God. In fact, these laws are the laws of man, merely uniformities of sequence which we have observed. A law of nature is a description of the way in which events follow one another. But many of these sequences may be modified at any time by the intervention of our own directing intelligence. The match thrown in the waste basket sets a fire which will burn the house, but water thrown by us upon the flames will put them out. The physician introduces antitoxin into the child to destroy the germs of disease which are threatening its life. In so doing, neither a miracle nor a violation of natural law takes place, only a new combination of forces already in existence which results in the saving of a life. The response of God to prayer for the recovery of one who is ill may be an act of intervention of the above type. The physician may be endowed with wisdom to apply the proper treatment or, under the stimulus of increased faith,

reserves of strength may be tapped with the result that the disease is vanquished.

But over and beyond every such favorable argument, there is no objection to prayer which the value that it has been to countless generations does not outweigh. It works and that is enough. It has brought comfort to multitudes, giving them solace in their sorrow and companionship in their loneliness. It has banished evil from their lives and lifted them above temptation. It has refined coarse sensibilities and sharpened the edge of many a blunted conscience. Millions have found and kept the way of life through its ministry. I know that if I pray earnestly, sincerely and habitually, I cannot go far wrong. Lord teach me to pray.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

I

To many this may seem an unnecessary study. They will say that everybody knows what Christianity is. But it is a safe rule to be suspicious of this "everybody" form of statement. Usually it does not stand the test of analysis. Since the Christian church is divided into hundreds of segments, it is obvious that there has not been any definite agreement as to what Christianity is up to the present date. How strange it is that men upon matters of the spirit have always been so sure of their opinions, that they have been ready to divide churches rather than yield an iota of these convictions! Little reflection should be necessary to show that dogmatism is a dangerous approach to truth. It is easy to see that other dogmatists are wrong; we should therefore be critical of ourselves.

That five times five are twenty-five, is a conclusion which can be demonstrated to any normal mind. The same is true of the proposition that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. But no such demonstration is possible, when I assert that the substitutionary theory of the atonement is essential to Christianity, and must be adopted instead of the governmental theory. Whether or not the plenary inspiration of scripture is integral to Christian faith, it is evident that this doctrine cannot be proved in the sense that we can prove that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. In the light of this limitation it is readily seen that our hold upon such a truth is only provisional at best.

It should therefore be held subject to modification in

the event of new evidence. Theology like life must keep the doors and windows open, and always be hospitable to the fresh approaches of the spirit. The partisan attitude is just as damaging to the religious judgment as to the social or political. It is a safe rule not to be over-emphatic about any doctrine which is susceptible of different interpretations or incapable of absolute proof. If this rule is faithfully observed, we will never make the mistake of barring from the household of our faith any one whom Christ includes. This is the anomalous and embarrassing position in which the intelligent members of the majority of the multitudinous branches of the church find themselves at the present moment. Candor and common sense force them to admit that there are vast numbers of people who cannot or will not subscribe to their tenets, but who by all the tests of which the human heart knows, are as much entitled to the name Christian as they themselves.

II

The first affirmation that I can make about Christianity is that it is a religion. I am not using the word in any of its limited senses as when we speak of the Jewish or Roman Catholic religion. Here I am at the opposite pole from Parson Thwackum in *Tom Jones*, who delivered himself in the following terms,—“When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.” No argument is needed to show that such a narrow outlook is both erroneous and unfair in the light of the knowledge which has developed since that worthy cleric’s day. Religion is as wide as human life.

Religion in this sense is man’s only hope and stay. It unites the rude savage with the profoundest philosopher, the worshiper of “sticks and stones” with the worshiper of the ever-living God. Underneath all specific creeds and systems religion, the thing itself, is always

seeking more adequate expression and to make assurance doubly sure that man will live on under happier conditions, when disaster and death have done their worst. Christianity shares this conviction with every other religious system. It no longer feels that the non-Christian is utterly bereft of light. It rejoices to believe that every man is born with religious inclinations in which lie the potency and promise of everlasting life. Out of our common human frailty and ignorance religion is born. Overwhelmed by the mystery and majesty of the universe, as man in his weakness and littleness gropes in the darkness for comfort and support, he discovers his kinship with his fellows of every race, creed and clime. I know that Christianity is one form of this universal attempt to find God.

III

This knowledge however does not carry me far enough, since it does not differentiate Christianity from other religions. Nor is mere assertion of its supremacy among the other forms of faith sufficient. Because I believe in that supremacy does not make it so. Jew, Mohammedan and Buddhist are alike convinced that their faith is the highest revelation. How can I state the facts in such a manner that men of open mind will see that the Christian way is the surest and best approach to God?

The essential thing to remember in this connection is that Christianity is the religion of Jesus Christ. Therein lies its sole appeal for the undivided franchise of the human race. If any one would learn the difference between Christianity and Mohammedanism his answer lies in the difference between Christ and Mohammed. There is an abundance of evidence available as to the character and purpose of these two founders of faiths which are both contending for the mastery of the world, so that we are justified in accepting the conclusion indicated by that evidence. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This is equally true when we compare Christ and any

other founder or chief exponent of religion. While there is an intimate and integral relationship between Christianity and Judaism, there is also a fundamental difference. Judaism reached unsurpassable heights of spiritual aspiration and illumination in some of the psalmists and prophets, but in Christ this aspiration and light produced its full harvest of character. The former gave voice to truths of wonderful beauty thus placing mankind forever in their debt. But Christ *was* the Truth. Micah could say in words of matchless beauty, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Because Christ had transmuted these true and beautiful sentiments into terms of his own being, he could affirm with higher truth and immeasurably greater cogency, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The character of Christ is definitely revealed in detail in the four gospels. They describe the impact of that character upon the generation in which he exercised his earthly ministry. His message was himself; we cannot separate him from his words. What he was preached for him better than what he said. This is the explanation of his power. Sympathy, purity, integrity, humility, courage, righteousness, and every other grace and virtue were daily sermons of his preached by his daily life.

As a leader or example, however, he did not stand apart from mankind in splendid isolation. He identified himself with the race in all its needs, in its sorrows and aspirations. He endured every humiliation and made every sacrifice to make this identification absolute. Therein lies the explanation of his ability, possessed in like degree by no other founder of a religion, to generate in every man who comes under his influence a character of the same quality as his own. The faithful follower of Christ becomes like him in motive and conduct. Christ is the vine; the disciple is the branch. In this

integral relationship is found the secret of the disciple's strength and the fruit he bears, in spirit and in action. I know Christianity as the religion which originated in Christ, and his experience of all the sorrows, limitations, hopes and aspirations of the race. I know it as the religion which is ever taking new shape by the propelling power of his love in lives which reveal his spirit alike in motive and in conduct.

IV

In human nature there is an ineradicable desire to rationalize or explain every experience. Christianity is too momentous and vital a movement to be made an exception to his rule, and multitudes of attempts have been made to show what it is and how it works. Strangely enough most of these attempts betray an utter disregard of the possibility of new light in the future. They have usually been looked upon as the final word, and have fettered the free movement of the spirit when so accepted. A theology is one outcome of Christianity because of this drive in the mind to define or describe its essential genius. Theology is the explanation of religion. Without minimizing its importance, it is obvious that the explanation of a thing can never be as important as the thing itself. Theology is thus of secondary value. Religion is so deep, vital and universal that every age has tried to explain it, just as it has tried to explain the growth of plants, the processes of the mind, or the movements of the stars. Sometimes these explanations have been pitifully inadequate or even grotesque, yet this has not invalidated the reality of the experience they have sought to explain. To explain a pestilence as due to the anger of the gods, does not alter the fact that it destroyed many lives. To say that the sun has set indicates that darkness has arrived, even though it is not a correct description of what has actually taken place.

Since there probably never can be a complete and final

explanation of religious experience, it must be remembered that theology is always provisional. Because it takes the color of the age in which it is formulated, it needs to be revised as our horizons change, just as our theories of chemistry and physics require revision, as new facts are discovered. Thus the Westminster Confession of Faith is silent upon the Fatherhood of God and his love. It has nothing to say about missions and although the kingdom of heaven is the central theme in the teaching of Jesus it is only mentioned incidentally. In its positive utterances, that confession affirms that the world was made in six days; that by the decree of God some men are fore-ordained to everlasting death; that through the original corruption of our nature we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil. It calls Roman Catholics idolaters, and brackets them with infidels. It implies that dying infants who are not elect, suffer eternal punishment. One of my earliest recollections is the constantly reiterated statement of a worthy Presbyterian elder, whose personal life was far better than his theology, that "hell is paved with infants not a span long." The poor man lived to see this doctrine repudiated by the minds of his children. His gruesome theology turned his son into an agnostic. Such results always follow the failure of the church to adjust its theology to the new light of its age.

What I have said above is not meant to imply that I think the Westminster Confession of Faith was not a notable intellectual achievement. On the contrary the best thought of the time in which it took shape went into its making. The men who framed it, however, had no prescient gifts which enabled them to anticipate the discoveries of the future. They were in the dark in regard to the enlarged knowledge of the Bible and of human nature, the clearer vision of the divine purpose, the growing complexity of society and a thousand other factors of our life to-day. To continue to use their con-

clusions as the standard by which to test the validity of our opinions upon theological questions is not only irrational but does both them and ourselves a grave injustice.

Theology bears about the same relation to religion that botany bears to the growth of plants, a map to the country it describes, or astronomy to the movements of the stars. Botany, maps and astronomy change as our knowledge of plants, topography of the country and the movements of the stars enlarge. So theology must change its form as men adjust their thought to the new truth that is continually rewarding their researches. The theology of an age which believed that we live in a three-story universe about 6000 years old with a basement of burning brimstone for the wicked, a first floor for probationers and a third floor for the redeemed, is utterly impossible in an age which measures the universe of time and space in terms of distances requiring thousands of years for the light of unknown stars to reach an earth, that is no longer the center of the universe, but relatively to other cosmic bodies a mere fleck of dust. Religion on the other hand is the same experience in every age. The affirmation "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" strikes no less reverberating a chord of assurance in my heart than it did in that of my forbears who were also able to find consolation in it, though they believed that the earth was flat, and that the majority of the human race were fore-ordained to "adamantine chains and penal fire."

Relatively unimportant though theology be compared to religion, this does not mean that one theology is as good as another, nor that we should be content with less than the best. On the contrary we should give our sincerest thought to the problems of the soul and its relations with God. While maps are not as valuable as the land they describe, we want the best maps possible and are always improving upon those we have. So too it must be in our explanations of the nature of God, man, sin, salvation,

and immortality. As we realize, however, the inadequacy of any and all human explanations of these truths that are rooted in infinity, we will neither be scornful of those who disagree with us, nor will we seek to impose our opinions upon others. Theology changes, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day and forever.

v

It is a law of life that everything vital seeks to find outward and visible embodiment. Christianity, therefore, is an institution as well as a religion and a theology. Thus Christianity would have become a spent force before it had traveled very far had it not been organized into the church. The spirit that freed men from bondage to sin and death found for itself a body in the worldwide institution, bearing the name of Christ, which in spite all its defects has withstood the attrition of the centuries. Those who tell us that membership in the church is not essential to spiritual welfare overlook this fundamental law that everything vital must have an instrument through which to act. Sentiments however noble that do not have an institution through which to bring their influence definitely to bear upon men and society are doomed to disappear.

A few months before the election of Mr. Harding, there was a nation-wide though undirected movement in favor of Mr. Hoover for President. Men of every shade of political opinion, recognizing his remarkable organizing power, and moved by his splendid service in Europe, were enthusiastic in urging his candidacy. But the sentiment died out as rapidly as it had arisen. The organized politicians were behind the one candidacy but there was no organization through which the other could function. If an organism had been available through which it could operate as the mind operates through the body, it would have swept all opposition before it, but without such an instrument it was as futile as dynamite ex-

ploded in the open. This analogue explains the necessity for the church, through which the vague desires for righteousness which are floating about amorphously in millions of minds can function. It condenses them, confines them and directs them into practical channels for definite ends. The abolition of slavery, the prohibition of the liquor traffic and the achievement of a finer public conscience upon many issues, are examples of this process. Christianity, like every other manifestation of life, must operate through an organism to be effective.

This is not at all intended to mean that the institution is the all important thing, as is believed by those who make the church an end in itself. The church has meaning and value only as the spirit of Christ functions through it, which is another way of saying as it embodies truth, justice, love, forgiveness, mercy, and the assurance of immortality. If it seeks to put shackles on sincere opinion, or to impose artificial tests, such as forms or methods for its sacraments, it violates the spirit of Christ, and ceases to be an adequate vehicle of his purpose. But however many and tragic the blunders of the church, Christianity can not get along without a body of this kind through which to operate and reach the masses of mankind. The fact that the body it now has is crippled by self-inflicted wounds, does not justify the conclusion that Christianity could survive without it. With all its defects, which are after all the defects of our human nature, the church is essential to Christianity. The business of those who see these defects is to work for their removal, by inducing the church to incorporate within itself a larger measure of the spirit of Christ.

VI

Christianity is also a program for the making of a better world. That the world is wrong is not due to any lack of plans for setting it right. These modern days are

witnessing a remarkable fecundity in the formulation of schemes which are guaranteed by their authors to be the way to usher in the Kingdom of God. Strangely enough Christianity is usually overlooked by the advocates of these plans for the regeneration of mankind. Yet Christianity embraces all that is vital in such panaceas, and itself offers the one true program of redemption. The fatal defect of every scheme which is not religious in its originating impulse, no matter how worthy its object, or how well it appears on paper, is its failure to take sufficient account of the ignorance, the intrinsic selfishness, and the inertia of human nature. It is not enough to know the right; there must be the persevering will to do it. Some years ago two gifted thinkers, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, collaborated in writing a socialistic constitution for Great Britain. It is an able document. The duties and responsibilities of each group in the community are set forth with admirable clarity. Committees are provided for every function that their fertile imagination could foresee would be needed. One essential factor, however, is overlooked, and unfortunately this oversight invalidates the entire plan. One wheel or lever lacking from my watch, makes it useless as a timepiece, and one factor missed from a human equation, may render the conclusion utterly erroneous. What Mr. and Mrs. Webb did not estimate aright is human nature. Their plan would be most excellent if all men were unselfish, intelligent and devoted to the common weal. Only in that event it would not be necessary.

Right at this point the superiority of the Christian program becomes most evident. It is the most radical of all proposed cures for our social ills, using the word "radical" in its true sense of going to the root of the matter. Christianity instead of working from without inwards, works from within outwards. It begins at the core, and the core is the human heart. That must be transformed before the unselfish man becomes public

spirited or the dishonest man honest. If the ideal commonwealth is to be established, better materials must enter into its composition than those available now. These cannot be furnished by any legal or legislative scheme. Regeneration alone will produce them.

Nor should this argument be construed as indicating that I have fallen into the mistake of neglecting the social values of religion. It is not enough to Christianize men in their individual relations. That is a contradiction in terms. Man is a social being. He touches the lives of others continually and if he thinks only of his own spiritual welfare, paradoxical though it may appear, he soon has little or no spiritual welfare left to think of. The health of the soul depends upon its functioning in coöperation with others for the highest social ends that it knows. Mankind will never be saved by saving individuals, as evangelists of an older generation believed, for while one man is being redeemed from the underworld, the forces of evil are corrupting another to take his place. The stream of life must be purified at the source. Vicious environments will have to be cleansed before many of the best children have their right chance to grow into good citizens.

This is more revolutionary than it appears on the surface. For it means that Christianity must be made to function in every department of life, whereas at present it functions only in a few. Business, industry, housing, education, will all have to be transformed by the same process which makes the individual over new. The functioning of the spirit of Christ on a generous scale in every department of human enterprise is the one cure for a distempered world. That alone will eliminate distrust, antagonism, fear, greed, class conflict and all the other evil passions which at present disturb and imperil the social body. The spirit of Christ as interpreted and applied in the story of the Good Samaritan is as essential

in the relations of nations and classes as in the relations of individuals.

VII

Still another affirmation can be made about Christianity. It is a perpetual process of enlargement. Jesus began his ministry by a proclamation of good news. In the beginning Christianity was glad tidings and it is so still. It throws a flood of light upon our immediate problems. It also opens the way to the more spacious days that are yet to be. In the working out of the program to which reference has been made, many baffling questions arise. The cry of Thomas is often on men's lips—"How can we know the way?" What is social justice? a fair wage or profit? the right method to deal with the violator of law? What should the other nations do when some government oppresses a minority in a remote country? How far are we justified in building tariff walls against other peoples? What should our attitude be toward the persecuted subjects of belated lands who seek asylum on our shores? What is liberty? Christianity gives the answer to every such question in principle but not in specific terms. The answer is indirect rather than direct. In stimulating the conscience and the will to take its principles and work out their applications, it furnishes the key to the solution of every such problem.

To men of the legalistic type of mind this is unsatisfactory. They want to be told explicitly what their duty is. When such specific commands are not forthcoming, they usually act as if that meant to them that the Christian message has no light to throw upon the problem under discussion. This accounts for the striking inconsistencies in the lives of many professing Christianity. Personally they are devout and virtuous, but in their social, political and industrial relations, they are often hard and unjust. I have in mind a pious

manufacturer of great wealth, who gave several thousand pounds to furnish and equip an electric light plant for a mission of his church in Africa. Many of his employees were suffering at the time from an avoidable occupational disease, induced by long hours of labor under evil conditions, aggravated by the unsanitary houses he provided for them. Such men perceive no incongruity between their professed loyalty to Christ and their unchristian conduct. They justify themselves on the ground that after they pay their employees as they have agreed, all that remains belongs to them.

In this failure to permit the temper of Christ to function in the management of business and industry, we have the roots of the alienation of the masses of the working people from the church. They claim that the church sides with the employer because of his large contributions. Nevertheless, there are signs of a new and better order on the horizon. The gospel of Christ cannot be smothered permanently and prevented from applying its own true solution to our every problem. Much of the discontent in the world can be traced to an increasing recognition that present social, political and industrial standards are not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. It is only the latest chapter of the same discontent that Christianity has been sowing ever since it became an established influence in history. The gospel has been the source of a growing enlightenment through the centuries. The consequent heightening of both the private and public conscience in turn has found a way to spiritual advance.

If any one is in doubt as to whether the average level of virtue is superior in our day to the level of any previous age, his uncertainty will be relieved by acquiring a modest knowledge of history. Whatever phase of life is uppermost in his mind, he will soon learn that our standards in that department are higher than those of any previous generation. This is true of both the pri-

vate and public morals, and particularly evident in the increase of humanitarian sentiment. The cruelty of our ancestors of even a century or two ago, with men of high position present and exulting in savage glee at the public execution of criminals, is revolting to our sensibilities. To visualize how far we have advanced in less than three centuries, we need only to remember the decapitation of Oliver Cromwell's body after it was exhumed, and that his head was impaled before the public gaze on the exterior of Westminster Hall, where it remained for years exposed to the weather.

The cause of these changes for the better, slow and uncertain though they are, is the enlightening influence of the gospel which is always at work establishing itself more firmly in old areas of life, and originating new centers of activity. To a far greater degree than most scientists recognize, they are in the line of succession which goes back to the early scholars of the Christian church. The patient research of these old churchmen laid the foundations of modern knowledge, for their actuating motive is expressed in the inspiring words, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

VIII

Doubtless Christianity may be defined in many other aspects and in other terms than those I have mentioned; but in conclusion I call attention to one which is sufficient by itself to commend it to mankind. It is an ethic which is both a satisfying ideal, and still within the realm of practical achievement. It sets before men character of a definite type, and apart from the character of its devotees it makes no successful appeal to intelligent leaders of the race. Except Christians give a demonstration of its superiority in their conduct, it can never hope to win the allegiance of the world. Christianity must stand or fall by its own test. "By their fruits, ye shall know them." As a dear old bishop was wont to say

to his clergy, "Commend your gospel to your people by the grace, beauty, and integrity of your own lives." No claims of authority or of the special sanctions of God can be made a substitute for a favorable verdict based upon the free and open scrutiny of the fruits of Christianity, in fair and candid comparison with those of other religions.

Nor has the most timid Christian any reason to shrink from this test. Whoever is convinced that Christ is the supreme revelation of God, and his gospel "the power of God unto salvation," will not fear a comparison of the fruits of Christianity with those of any other faith. For the world knows no higher standard of measurement than character, and true Christianity asks for no favored treatment in the open court of opinion. "Show me thy faith by thy works" was the demand St. James made of those who were disposed to disregard the necessity of proving their claims of superiority for the religion they professed by superior conduct. The doctrine that good works are not essential to salvation is one of the most pernicious of heresies. Where there is salvation, there are good works. The victory of Christianity over the non-Christian faiths will never be won by arguments that attempt to show its supremacy on theoretical grounds. We may as well face the facts at once. If we would convert the Jews to believe that ours is the true religion, there is only one way. Appeals to prophecy will never do it. The claim that the teachings of Jesus are nobler than those of the Old Testament will also fail. Unless there are in the everyday life of Christians distinctive evidences of a deeper faith and serenity of soul, a greater purity of motive and simplicity and integrity of character, Christianity will never be victorious over its rivals.

The norm or model of manhood in the Christian ethic is the character of Christ illuminated by his teaching as set forth in the gospels and by its redemptive power in

history. Service in behalf of the blessed community, the kingdom of heaven, is its basic principle. Duty is its watchword, sympathy its motive, love its dynamic, faith its mental state. Among other qualities it emphasizes are purity, humility, courage, patience, kindness, mercy, and thorough-going integrity, united in a living whole by the spirit of self-sacrifice. The observance of the Golden Rule is this Christian man's chief delight.

The question can be legitimately raised why Christianity, if it is so exalted a system of morals, has not won even more signal victories. Just across the Mediterranean, within sight of Europe, lies Northern Africa, which once was Christian, but has for centuries been Mohammedan and remains practically untouched by the Christian influences of its European neighbors. Equally striking is the solidarity of the Jews within our Christian communities. There is only one answer, and that is a confession. Generally Christians do not live in accordance with the ethical principles to which they profess allegiance. They have therefore no ground for complaint when their neighbors, near or far, discount their claims, and measure the worth of their faith instead by their conduct. The truth is but few of those who profess to be so are really Christian. The majority have no vital religious experience; therefore their conduct is not and cannot be in full harmony with the teachings and example of Jesus. Hitherto our religious leaders have been relying mainly on Christianity as a theology and an institution. Before it can bear fruit in conduct there must be introduced a power of overcoming inertia, however, which no system of ethics can ever furnish. Lack of this dynamic force is the weakness of the Ethical Culture Society. It generates no driving power. Where it appears to flourish, its members are spending the accumulated spiritual values inherited by them from previous generations.

Christianity is the one religion which furnishes the

necessary energy for sustained sacrificial action. Where men are falling below the standard of conduct set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, their failure is due to a defective and inadequate religious experience. For a high morality is too rigorous in its demands to be attained by human strength of will alone. Its roots are always in God. The correction of those errors, shortcomings, and positive evils, therefore, which at present denature the Christian witness, can only be accomplished by strengthening the common appreciation of Christ. Christianity will abolish wars, class conflicts, and greed, and usher in the reign of love when Christians become Christian. So long as our deepest roots are carnal, a blight will blast our testimony and appeal to the non-Christian. While Christianity is an ethical ideal which is still largely unrealized, it will transform the world, when those who bear the name of Christ are hid with him in God.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE CHURCH

I

A little reflection will show that we use the word "church" in several different senses. "They are building a new church." Here the reference is to a definite structure at a definite place, in which worshippers are to assemble. Take the sentence, "I go to church." The meaning in this case is not that I go to a particular church but that I am accustomed to participate in public worship. Again we speak of the Presbyterian, the Baptist or the Roman Catholic church. These phrases indicate groups of the Christian world, each of which stands for a certain form of religious organization and body of doctrine and experience. Then we also use the word in a universal sense. We speak of the Christian church, including in our thought men of every shade of opinion who express their allegiance to Christ through any of the multitudinous sects into which the Christian world is divided. And still more inclusively the word is used to cover all organized religion, as when we contrast the church with the state. In this phrase "church" stands for all citizens of every faith within the nation who are associated for religious purposes by whatever name they are known.

Yet back of all this variety of usage which makes our language so confusing, there is a central idea which has come down to us through the channel of the Old and New Testaments and has been enlarged not alone by the experience of Christians in all ages but also by that of men of every faith. This germinal idea is the assembly or meeting for the public worship of God. The Christian church had its beginning when Jesus first gathered the little group of disciples around him. Under his guidance

they meditated upon the meaning of life and its ultimate purpose. They turned their thought to God and asked for his direction in all their living. Through communion with him, their souls were refreshed and strengthened to attack their daily tasks however difficult, with a new sense of power and the assurance of ultimate victory.

This would not have been possible to them had they been separated and deprived of the privilege of assembling together. For there is a chemistry of the spirit between souls. Bind men together by the same sense of God, and in that contact tides of power are released that render them immeasurably stronger than the aggregate of their individual powers. Christianity would never have gained ground against a hostile or indifferent world had it not been for this contribution of the spirit of God working like leaven through the individual members and building them into an organism, so that each one felt that he had back of him the entire power of the whole group. The heroism and endurance of the reformers and martyrs of every generation can be explained only by the reservoir of collective strength upon which they drew to achieve results that would have been impossible if they had been dependent upon themselves alone.

II

Thus an essential purpose of the church is the maintenance of public worship. True, a man can worship in private. On that account, some men make the claim that they do not need the church. They tell us that they worship in the quiet of their homes or in the silence of the field and forest. They go even further and say that in playing golf or driving over country roads, they commune with nature, which is another name for God. But this is fallacious. Valuable and indispensable though private worship is, it can never take the place of public worship any more than a man's private life, howsoever rich, ever enables him to dispense with his social life

in company with his fellows. When a man isolates himself from other men, he shuts himself and his life off from a vast source of power and soon there is no health left in him. The great achievements of the race are a three-sided product of the interplay between an individual, his fellows and God. Even the genius of the super-man must rest upon this tripod if it is to flower in noble action. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare could never have sung as they did were it not that they were acting as the spokesmen of this triple experience. Only as we act upon our fellows and experience their reaction in return and feel a sense of unity with them and through them with God, can we draw upon the invisible reservoir of strength open to us for the assistance required to give us the victory. In the church, it has been proved beyond peradventure we have an effective and abiding means of coming into this contact with them and with God. The results are immediate and fruitful. In this threefold relationship, we rise to our noblest stature. The baser elements of our nature are transformed and, in our renewed sense of God and human kinship, we perform our daily tasks with increased vitality. The man who lets the weeks go by without drawing upon this source of energy, is willfully choosing a life of poverty when wealth is his for the asking.

Worship may be defined as our human effort to express our recognition and appreciation of God's worth. By means of it, we hope to understand his character better and to identify our aims with his more completely.

III

St. Peter's answer to the question of Jesus: "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is the rock upon which the Christian church is built. It seems to me that those who believe that Jesus referred to Peter himself as the foundation of his church are hopelessly wrong. Peter was too much one of us.

He crumpled under the minor strains of loyal discipleship soon after this confession of his faith. "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me" was the rebuke he received from his Master. Three times he denied his relations with Jesus on the fatal night of the trial. For all his redeeming qualities, he never became the outstanding leader in the church. Paul's vision and influence were far greater. The Christian church would have been a Jewish sect if Peter had had his way, for he strove to impose the old Jewish rites upon all Gentile converts. At the Council in Jerusalem, where the issue was decided, not he but James held the place of eminence as president.

Like every other institution which is to survive, the church must continually renew its membership. It must keep the spiritual perception of Peter when he said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" so unmistakably to the fore that that spirit will communicate itself through the ranks of the rising generation. Too often this affirmation is made by full-grown men without an adequate experience of its meaning in the mind and heart of him who makes it. Many who pride themselves upon their orthodoxy are guilty on this count. Merely to repeat it over as a proposition which is true on the ground of tradition leaves the world cold. As Milton said, "A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy." Hence the church needs to develop men able to get under the skin of tradition and lay hold upon the presence of God and incorporate the truth of the gospel within their lives.

IV

The church may be described, therefore, as a spiritual school, to bring men to Christ. Now we should not lose

sight of the fact that the ignorant rather than the enlightened attend school. So the people to whom the church primarily ministers are not the good but those who realize how far short they fall from what they ought to be. Men frequently say that they are not good enough to unite with the church. But the church would be in a sorry plight if goodness were a condition of membership. If all who dare not think of themselves as good were to leave it tomorrow, who would remain? The essential condition of church membership is not goodness but the desire to be better, the hope and prayer that the nobler qualities of the soul may not be suppressed by worldly aims and physical passions, but manage to grow in the unity of the faith toward the fullness of the stature of Christ.

The criticism of the non-churchman that many members of the church are not what they ought to be is due to the same misunderstanding of the church's mission. The church is the community at worship and is therefore composed of the same men and women whom we meet in the other contacts of life. Some of them are kind and generous, some unkind and ungenerous. Some are public spirited and some are selfish and still others grade in between, but whatever their qualities, they are better men for worshiping than if they did not worship. Often their worship is perfunctory and formal. They do not actively sense its meaning and intention. But when every subtraction is made that can fairly be taken into account, the fact remains that the church is an asset to them and to the community. The man who contends that he is as good as his neighbor who goes to church is missing the point. The point is that he himself is not as good as he would be if he used this means of advancement for his soul.



The traditional claim for the church voiced by many leaders is that the true church must be holy, catholic and

apostolic. This is dream rather than reality as far as present achievement goes, but it is the ultimate ideal toward which all loyal churchmen are moving.

"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Holiness is wholeness, healthiness in body, mind and soul. For generations men thought that it had to do with matters of exterior conduct alone. Even there it was interpreted in negative terms. The holy man went into the wilderness as a hermit or became a monk. He refrained from pleasure and the indulgence of appetites innocent in themselves but declared to be out of keeping with his piety. He was faithful in observing the rites imposed by the law but paid little attention to the inner condition of his soul so long as his outward acts were correct. St. Simeon Stylites was his ideal.

In the New Testament teaching this is reversed. Here the emphasis is put upon the interior moral values of life. New Testament teaching passes from the negative, "Thou shalt not," to the positive, "Thou shalt." It requires the performance of duty not as a task but as the outgoing of a loving heart. The motive is spiritual rather than legal. Holiness is moral likeness to God. Man is exhorted to "be holy even as God is holy." In proportion as he is holy, he is told that he exhibits divine qualities in his life. He is to approximate that perfect moral sonship of which Christ is the unique example. The fruits of his life are to be akin to those of Christ. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." The meaning of this simple but striking figure is that the light and life and love of Christ flow from him as the sap through the branches into every human channel that will receive them, where they bear fruit like unto themselves. Holiness no longer consists in withdrawing from the world or in insulating ourselves from it, but in living unspotted in it by drawing upon the inexhaustible reservoirs of power which God opens to us. Because the church releases this divine energy its ministry makes for the holiness of all

who constitute it or come within the range of its witness and influence.

VI

Catholicity or all-inclusiveness is another mark of the ideal church that is ever in process of becoming. There are some branches of the church which claim to be catholic now but they can not produce the weight of evidence to sustain the claim before the court of the world's judgment. The term has many meanings and varies according to the experience and point of view of those who use it. The root idea is "on the whole" or "in general" from which universality as a note or characteristic has been derived. It is in this sense that Protestants use it in repeating the Apostle's Creed, whereas among Roman Catholics, the meaning is that given by St. Augustine, viz., "the observance of all divine precepts and all sacraments," which makes it synonymous with orthodoxy. That church claims to be universal in its sovereignty, complete in doctrine, adapted to the needs of men of every type and morally and spiritually perfect.

Though Protestants deny these claims, they do not show themselves consistent, for every sect among them, whether large or small, exhibits a marked tendency to the same exclusiveness of spirit. Were it not for this tendency to make our peculiar convictions a source of division, the different branches of the church would never have arisen. In our day we are outgrowing the feeling that the sect to which we belong has any priority of claim upon the favor of heaven. Our fathers, however, had no such doubts. They have left us an embarrassing legacy in the form of ecclesiastical organizations which cannot possibly make a universal appeal. The creedal or dogmatic foundations of every sect are denied in part and in their emphasis by the members of most other sects. Who but a Baptist could believe that immersion is necessary to salvation? What non-Presbyterian would accept the

Westminster Confession of Faith as setting forth the system of doctrine taught in the Old and New Testaments? It is no discourtesy to the memory of John Wesley for the non-Methodist to deny that his sermons form a completely satisfactory doctrinal foundation for the church. Thus without exception, the formal claims of every body which claims to be the church of Christ dissolve when subjected to analysis. However satisfactory its peculiar claims are to its own members, they make no definite or compelling appeal to those outside its fold.

This is a tragic weakness for it forces the churches to exclude those whom the logic of common sense also forces them to acknowledge as members of the kingdom of heaven. Surely it is pathetic that any group of disciples claiming to represent Christ should refuse recognition and complete fellowship to those whom they admit their Master has received. For example, make baptism an absolute condition of church membership. This automatically raises a barrier against the Quaker who by his character offers certain proof that he has been accepted by Christ. Likewise doctrinal tests often exclude many who have been brought up in other schools of thought but whose experience is undeniably Christian. Any church which is narrower in its conditions of membership than the Kingdom of God is that far uncatholic and unchristian. Thus catholicity or all-inclusiveness still remains a far-off ideal.

Until the different denominations among the churches are ready to lose their lives for Christ, this limitation will continue to restrict their influence. Here they have much to learn from science, which never requires its devotees to accept any principle as once for all determined. Every axiom of science is open to the possibility of revision. If any one has new light to throw upon it he can get a hearing. In this way science is kept a living, growing thing. One cannot conceive a Presby-

terian, or Episcopal or Unitarian geography or arithmetic. We will never have a truly catholic church until Christians become a body of seekers after the meaning of life and destiny who expect new light to break from God's word on our fundamental duties toward God and man.

The sooner we give up this dream of a universality in thought wherein all men would think identically, the better it will be for the church and the world. Thinking alike is impossible where thought is real. God never made two maple leaves exactly alike, even upon the same tree, much less two human brains. One of our priceless gifts will always be our individuality. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" is an exhortation which is in entire harmony with the right of each to think for himself. One of the gravest weaknesses of democracy is the prevalent desire to standardize thought and the development of the art of propaganda to which this leads. This can not be achieved without destroying the power to think creatively. The ideal commonwealth is not a hive of bees where freedom is restricted to the narrowest terms, but rather the well-ordered family where each member has all the flexibility of movement that is consistent with the integrity of the family's life. If this principle had always been recognized, many a grievous schism would have been avoided. As we have already seen, Peter and others of like mind in the early church, tried to force the adoption of their narrow ideas upon the church, and had it not been for the vision of Paul supported by the liberating spirit of Christ, they would have succeeded and Christianity would have soon become a spent force.

It is easy enough to recognize an instance of the principle under discussion at such a distance, but very difficult in a case close at hand. Within a century the Peters of Protestantism have tried, in some cases successfully, to silence and drive from the ministry of the church David Livingstone, Frederick W. Robertson, Bishop Colenso,

Albert Barnes, Norman Macleod, W. Robertson Smith, A. B. Bruce, Marcus Dods, Henry Drummond, Charles A. Briggs and others of equal eminence. Most of these men have been canonized since in the affections of a subsequent generation. Some of them have won immortal fame as heroes of the faith or flaming torches of truth. In the light of these mistakes made by sincere but bigoted men, how foolish we are to run the risk of repeating the same blunder. Were it not for the urge within a few men that pushes them on to higher ideals of thought where the horizons of the kingdom of the mind expand and sometimes open up new continents of aspiration, all the race would sink into the static condition which was for so many centuries a leading quality of Chinese life. Undoubtedly many innovators do go astray but the best method of refuting their errors is not to force them into silence, but to subject their views and program to free and thorough discussion. This is the method of the gospel. Let both tares and wheat grow together until the harvest. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

When the spirit of Christ becomes the dominant quality in those who constitute the church, it will be catholic and all-inclusive, and not before. Each of us has a contribution to make to this end. As we take on his nature, we will increase in sympathy and understanding and will thus do justice to those who differ from us, for our actions will speak a universal language. Instead of trying to force our opinions of the church and its doctrines upon our neighbors, we will be content to commend our convictions to them by such beauty of witness as we can command our lives to express, remembering always that if we fail in that, we fail in all things else. Moreover, we will realize that the truth upon which we now have our grip is only provisional. We are limited both in knowledge and experience and will therefore not be so sure of ourselves as to condemn others for holding opinions contrary to ours. But "let knowledge grow from

more to more" and at last men will think in catholic and all-inclusive terms, realizing that God's only requirement of man is that he do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with God.

VII

In addition to holiness and catholicity, the ideal church is also apostolic, a word which has been buffeted about in many a divisive controversy. The traditional meaning is that the authority of the church is derived from the apostles through the continuous chain of their successors. By the laying on of hands, the virtues and sanctions vested in them were transmitted to those who were to succeed them. Where this mechanical continuity is lacking, there can be no valid ministry. All exponents of this doctrine would agree that it excludes from the true church as irregular, the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and all other so-called "dissenters" or "non-conformists." While many Episcopalians claim that their church is in the legitimate apostolic line, this is denied with equal vigor by the Church of Rome, which recognizes no more virtue in the Protestant Episcopal or Anglican Church than in any other schismatic group.

It is difficult for the man of scientific training or temperament to grasp the point of view of those who would base their claim to authority upon such narrow and mechanical grounds. This theory is closely akin to the outworn idea of the right to rank and honor on the ground of birth alone. While there are doubtless some lingering traces of that ancient superstition still surviving, it is doomed eventually to disappear.

No special privileges belong to any favored group. There is no respect of persons with God. The only thing that counts is character. Where this is Christian in its quality, its roots are "hid with Christ in God," which is another way of saying that its possessor is apostolic in the texture of his soul. For apostolic succession is

spiritual and not mechanical in its nature. Any man may enter it at any time and his entrance cannot be prevented by any army of prelates claiming to hold the keys. George Fox, John Wesley, General Booth, Dwight L. Moody, and a host of others known and unknown, affirm the fact. He who is minded to learn the truth and to do God's will is in the true line of succession to the apostles and their Master. He holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven, for the influences which go out from his life tend to create in others the same revealing experience which is expressed in the testimony, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Everyone who can say that out of the depths of his soul is an apostle. There is no break in the chain of personalities and the influences which unite him with Christ.

One of the indelible marks of the first apostles was their fervor. They were enthusiastic in proclaiming the joy which they themselves had experienced in their knowledge of God and of the liberating gospel of Jesus and they were eager that others should share their newfound freedom with them. Thus they responded to the impulse which came to them from God, prompting them to go out into the world and tell others so that they should also become the possessors of the same priceless gift. The apostolicity of the church of to-day cannot be proved by historical claims based upon beliefs expressed in councils held in remote centuries, or by the appeal to dogmas formulated in the ages less enlightened than ours, but only by the fruits of the spirit embodied in the lives of those who compose its membership. Grapes do not grow on thorns nor figs on thistles, nor do apostles spring from any other soil than a Christlike mind. Where the spirit of Christ is, there is the church, by whatever name it is known.

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